



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

D. M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Application Number: 3006094
Applicant Name: Sara Imhoff, Johnston Architects for Jason Morrow,
Owner
Address of Proposal: 3650 Bridge Way North

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

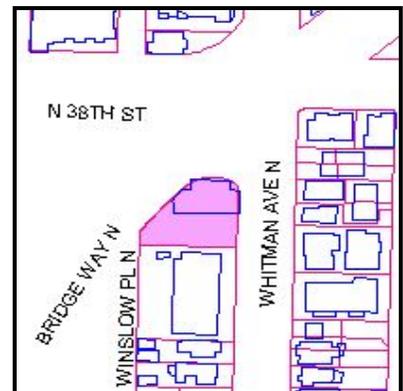
Land Use Application to allow a three-story, seven unit townhouse structure. Below grade parking to be provided within the structure. Project includes 1,644 cu. yds. of grading. Existing structure to be demolished. The following approvals are required:

Administrative Design Review - Chapter 23.41, (SMC) including departures from development standards: lot coverage, side yard setback, open space at ground level, and structure depth.

SEPA DETERMINATION: Exempt DNS MDNS EIS
 DNS with conditions
 DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The approximately 7,717 square foot development site is located on Bridge Way North between Winslow Place North and Whitman Avenue North in the Fremont neighborhood just off the Aurora Bridge. The property is zoned Lowrise 3 (L3) and is currently the site of the Bridge Motel. For several blocks in all directions the zoning is Lowrise 3 (L3). The Seattle Department of Transportation recently completed a major street improvement project in the area which closed Whitman Avenue North at Bridge Way to through traffic and included sidewalk improvements and landscaping along the perimeter of a portion of the site.



Development in the vicinity consists of several large multifamily buildings, newer townhouse developments and a few single family residences. The area is undergoing redevelopment with several projects under construction.

The site is irregular in shape and is bounded by Whitman Avenue North, Bridge Way North and Winslow Place North. Because of the challenges posed by the irregular shape and recent street improvements the applicant has volunteered for the Administrative Design Review process to request departures from development standards. Administrative Design Review is conducted by DPD staff and does not involve Design Review Boards.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to remove the existing motel structure and construct seven, three-story townhomes with underground parking for seven vehicles. The parking will be accessed from the southeast corner on Whitman Avenue North. All ground level open space is proposed to be common open space with private open space to be provided on rooftop gardens. The applicant proposes several features that will maximize energy efficiency including sun canopies, attractive rainwater drainage features and green rooftops. The applicant will be pursuing a LEED Gold rating.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

DPD received two written comment letters and some phone calls concerning the project during the EDG comment period. One comment expressed support for the project in general as an improvement over existing conditions. Another expressed concern about pedestrian safety on Bridge Way. A third expressed the same concern for pedestrian safety in addition to a desire to have all native vegetation in the project landscaping. The comment period ended January 10, 2007.

PRIORITIES:

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the DPD planner provides the siting and design guidance described below and identifies by letter and number those siting and design guidelines found in the City of Seattle's "*Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings*" of highest priority to this project. All guidelines apply, however the following are of the highest priority.

The guidance by the Department appears after the bold guidelines text and the recommendations from the final recommendations follow in italicized text.

A. Site Planning

A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics.

The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.

The proposal should take into account the location on the Aurora Avenue off-ramp and the recent street improvements made by Seattle Department of Transportation. These improvements present an opportunity to tie into the existing design to help maximize pedestrian safety.

The proposed spatial design of the residential units utilizes this irregular site to its best advantage. The Department is, therefore, supportive of the building depth and side setback departure requests.

Recommendation: The Department is particularly concerned about the location of this site at the off-ramp of Aurora Avenue North and the effect on pedestrian safety. While it is impractical to provide street trees for the entire length of site on Bridge Way, a suitable opportunity exists to provide an extra measure of pedestrian safety where none currently exists. See discussion at E-3.

A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street

For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.

&

A-7 Residential Open Space

Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.

The development should design the open space to maximize its usability, by providing contiguous square footage and connectivity. Landscaping the open spaces to promote eyes on the street, while still providing security and screening is of importance.

The Department supports the location of the open space on the roof as well as the roof coverage departure requests. The applicant should provide a detailed color landscape plan that shows the roof gardens and the ground level open space.

Recommendation: The applicant has maximized the use of the ground-level open space integrating a continuous common open space with rain garden features to promote sustainability. The units are well screened from the busy street by extensive landscaping and a solid opaque wall. Because all of the ground-level open space is for common usage, roof gardens with overhead weather protection are provided for private usage. The Department approves the departure requests for rooftop private open space and the ground-level common open space.

C. Architectural Elements and Material

C-4 Exterior Finish Materials.

Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

The proponent should show detailed color and material studies in the next design response. The studies should show specific material and color detailing for facades, windows, doors and pedestrian entrances. The applicant should provide two detailed color elevations with specific

material callouts embedded in the MUP plans; one elevation from Bridge Way North and one perspective drawing from a northeast vantage point (similar to the EDG package color elevation). These drawings should include the proposed landscaping to gain a holistic view of the proposal.

Recommendation: The detail and finishes provided by the applicant are appropriate for multifamily construction. As proposed the building will be compatible with the neighborhood and will be durable and attractive.

D. Pedestrian Environment

D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances.

Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry(s) should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather.

Pedestrian paths within the site should be clearly delineated, sufficiently lighted and designed. The Department encourages the use of semi-pervious path-delineating materials that compliment building materials and colors. The path materials and design should be shown in detail with any proposed materials. A part of the structure's success will be found in the construction details.

Recommendation: Entry paths will be paved with sand set pavers that will shed water directly into the rain garden areas to allow for infiltration. All entry paths will be lighted with sconce fixtures affixed to adjoining site walls. Keyed and locked entry gates from the exterior of the site will provide security along this high vehicular traffic street.

E. Landscaping

E-1 Reinforce existing landscape character of neighborhood.

Where possible, and where there is not another overriding concern, landscaping should reinforce the character of neighboring properties and abutting streetscape.

The designer should incorporate meaningful landscaping in the front of the structure which would create a good transition complementing the existing pattern of neighboring structures. Street trees are required to be provided in the parking strip on Whitman Avenue North on the east side of the project site.

Recommendation: Landscaping will provide screening for individual units that filters outward visibility with a sense of safety. Street trees are provided along Whitman Avenue N. An additional street tree will be provided at the southwest corner of the site which will provide scalar relief to on-site trees while mirroring the landscaped island and meandering sidewalk located near the Metro bus stop. Plantings transitioning from large canopy trees to groundcovers will mitigate the apparent scale of the buildings.

E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site

Landscaping including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.

and

E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions

The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.

The Department believes an opportunity exists to enhance pedestrian safety along the portion of Bridge Way North from Winslow Place North to the sidewalk improvements recently completed by Seattle Department of Transportation. This section of sidewalk is approximately eight (8) feet in width and has no planting strip separating the sidewalk from the traffic exiting Aurora Avenue North frequently at high speeds. The Department would like to see the applicant present a creative solution to this inhospitable situation that might include continuing the serpentine design of the sidewalk meandering onto the applicants property creating two or three “islands” of space that are at least 10 ½ feet in width which is sufficient width to plant trees and a small amount of shrubbery at the street edge. This meandering design along this section would also allow for the meandering of what appear to be privacy walls at the property line thus softening their effect. These privacy walls should vary in height and incorporate some distinctive texture or design or be screened by landscaping. The applicant will need to talk to the Seattle Department of Transportation about the process for providing easements for a public sidewalk on private property.

The applicant should also enter into a discussion with Metro about the possibility of moving the existing bus stop 25-30 feet to the northeast which would provide greater safety for those waiting for, or disembarking from, buses.

Recommendation: The applicant submitted three alternatives to streets trees along Bridge Way. The Department is recommending that alternative “D” be incorporated into the site design and the decision will be conditioned as such. The design consists of a planting area located approximately where the existing curb cut is located at the southwest corner of the site. A street tree shall be located not less than 3.5 feet from the curb face and not less than 2 feet from the sidewalk edge. The planting area may be tapered on either side and the side walk may be narrowed to 5 feet in this area. Additional shrubs and groundcover should be included in the planting area. This will require that the sidewalk be meandered onto the site and an easement or dedication will be required. This alternative will provide a traffic calming effect responding to Guideline E-3 and will reinforce the design continuity of the meandering sidewalk at the easterly end of the site (E-1). It will also provide additional screening for the site from traffic exiting Aurora Avenue North.(E-2).

MASTER USE PERMIT

The applicant applied for the Master Use Permit March 1, 2007.

RECOMMENDATION

Departure from Development Standards:

The applicant has requested departures from the Land Use Code development standards. They are the following:

Standard	Request	Justification	Recommendation
Structure Depth 65% = 63'8" 23.45.011A	81% = 79' 6"	Site is U-shaped; THs are arranged to fit site – each TH not to exceed 25' depth.	Approved A-1
Lot Coverage 50% = 3,859SF 23.45.010A	56.4% = 4,359SF	Add'l SF for balconies, sunshades, solar panels, arbors & planters necessary to obtain LEED gold status.	Approved A-1; C-4
Open Space 300SF average/unit at ground level 23.45.016A3	All ground level OS be common OS and 350SF private open space provided on rooftop decks.	Ground level OS and landscaping will be designed to create neighborhood community space to enhance interaction and safety.	Approved A-7; D-1
Side Setbacks 6' for bldg. 66' – 80' in depth 23.45.014A	To allow a portion of the principal structure to extend into the required side setback to allow for solar collectors and sunscreens.	Solar collectors and sun screens are necessary to obtain LEED status. Bldg. footprint will not exceed the 6' requirement.	Approved A-1; C-4; D-1
Roof Coverage 15% for structures above hght limit; 20% total incl. mech equip. 23.45.009D4	Requesting 23.2% - 24.8% roof coverage for add'l weather protection canopy added to stair penthouse.	Sun and rain protection for rooftop open space areas.	Approved A-7

Public Comment:

No comments were received during the MUP comment period which ended April 11, 2007.

Recommendation:

After considering the proposed design and the project context, hearing public comment, and reconsidering the previously stated design priorities, the planner feels that all of the guidance the architect received has been successfully addressed. After much scrutiny of the site, the neighborhood context, proposed architectural massing and facades, open space, and materials the Department supports the departures and recommends **approval** of the design.

DIRECTOR'S DECISION: DESIGN REVIEW

The Director of DPD has reviewed the design and finds that it is consistent with the City of Seattle Design Review *Guidelines for Multifamily & Commercial Buildings*. The recommendations summarized above were based on the application submitted to DPD on March 1, 2007, revised June 4, 2007. Design, siting or architectural details not specifically identified or altered in these recommendations are expected to be reflected in all future plans submitted to DPD.

After considering the site and context, public comments, the response to the design guideline priorities and reviewing the plans the Director approves subject design, as well as the requested departures with conditions listed below.

CONDITIONS – Design Review

Prior to Issuance of Master Use Permit

1. Update Sheets A1.2, A2.1, L6.00 and L6.01 of the MUP plans showing the additional planting area, street tree, and meandering sidewalk at the southwest corner of the site as shown on Option “D” on Sheet L2.01 of MUP Application.

Prior to Issuance of the Building Permit

2. Prior to issuance of the building permit, the applicant shall record an easement granted to the City of Seattle for the sidewalk located at the southeast corner of the site and which meanders onto the site. The easement and street tree planting area shown on the approved MUP shall be shown on building plans along with the legal description of the easement .
3. Submit for review and approval to the Land Use Planner (to be included in the Building Permit plans) a copy of the recorded easement located at the southeast corner of the site where the sidewalk meanders onto the site.
4. Include the color drawings of elevations and revised landscaping plan from MUP plans as part of the building permit sets (1 and 2) of record.

Prior to Certificate of Occupancy

5. Compliance with the approved design features and elements, including exterior materials, finishing details, roof amenities, colors, landscaping and R.O.W. improvements, shall be verified by the DPD Planner assigned to this project. Inspection appointments with the Planner (Marti Stave 206 684-0239) must be made at least 3 working days in advance of the inspection.

During Construction

6. All changes to the exterior facades of the building and landscaping on site and in the R.O.W. must be submitted as a revision to the building permit and reviewed by a Land Use Planner prior to proceeding with any proposed changes.

Non-Appealable Conditions

7. Any proposed changes to the exterior of the building or the site or must be submitted to DPD for review and approval by the Land Use Planner (Marti Stave 206-684-0239). Any proposed changes to the improvements in the public right-of-way must be submitted to DPD and SDOT for review and for final approval by SDOT.
8. Compliance with all images and text on the MUP drawings, design review guidelines and approved design features and elements (including exterior materials, landscaping and ROW improvements) shall be verified by the DPD planner assigned to this project (Marti Stave 206-684-0239), or by the Design Review Manager. An appointment with the assigned Land Use Planner must be made at least three working days in advance of field inspection. The Land Use Planner will determine whether submission of revised plans is required to ensure that compliance has been achieved.
9. Embed all of these conditions in the cover sheet for the MUP permit and for all subsequent permits including updated MUP plans, and all building permit drawings and embed the colored MUP recommendation drawings in the building permit plan sets.
10. Add the departure matrix shown on page 6 of this document to the coversheets of the MUP and Building Permit Plans to be microfilmed.

Signature: (signature on file)
Marti Stave, Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development

Date: August 13, 2007