



City of Seattle

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**

Project Number: 3009127
Applicant: Ginger Garff of Johnston Architects for Casa Latina
Address: 1614 South Jackson Street

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow a 3-story building containing 4,000 sq. ft. of office space over 2,000 sq. ft. of ground level retail (Casa Latina). Parking for 8 vehicles to be provided at grade. Project includes 381 cubic yards of grading. Existing structures to remain.

The following approvals are required:

Design Review Departures (SMC Chapter 23.41)

Development Standard Departure to allow less than the required number of small spaces (SMC23.54.030b2).

SEPA – Environmental Determination –Chapter 25.05 Seattle Municipal Code.

SEPA DETERMINATION: Exempt DNS MDNS EIS

 DNS with conditions

 DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition,
or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

Current Development:



The proposed development is in the west area of the site currently occupied by surface parking and open space with grass and shrubs. The east half of the site is occupied by two office buildings, occupied by Casa Latina services. The building on the corner of 17th Ave S. and S. Jackson St is a mid-century two story masonry building with a glazed storefront and glazed second story facing S. Jackson St. The one story building in the northeast corner of the site was constructed in 2008.

Access:

Vehicular access to the site is from the alley at the north property line. Pedestrian access to the site is possible from S. Jackson St, 17th Ave S., and the alley.

Surrounding Development:

Surrounding development includes a mix of newer 6-story mixed use apartment and retail buildings, older 1-2 story commercial buildings, institutions, newer townhouses, and older single family residential structures.

A new mixed-use 6 story structure with restaurant and retail at the ground floor is located to the east, across 17th Ave S. New townhouses are located to the northeast across 17th Ave S. The Japanese Congregational Church is located north of the site across the alley. A vacant lot is located to the west. An early 20th-century two story masonry structure is located to the west of the vacant lot. Older 1-2 story commercial buildings are located to the south, across S. Jackson St.

ECAs:

There are no Environmentally Critical Areas on or adjacent to the site.

The neighborhood character includes a wide mix of age, style, and use of buildings. Most of the newer mixed-use buildings are located on the north side of S. Jackson St, in the blocks east of the site. S. Jackson St is lined with these newer structures, early to mid-20th century commercial buildings, surface parking lots, and vacant lots. Residential structures including older single family structures, older apartments, and newer townhouses are located in the blocks north and south of Jackson St.

Neighborhood Character:

Nearby institutions include the Japanese Congregational Church north of the site across the alley, other nearby churches, and Pratt Fine Arts Institute two blocks to the east. Recreational opportunities can be found at Pratt Park, a block to the northeast.

S. Jackson St is a primary arterial with heavy vehicular and transit use. The area slopes from the east down to the west. S. Jackson St is a primary connection between Pioneer Square, the International District, the Central District, and the Mount Baker neighborhood. S. Jackson St also offers views of Elliott Bay to the west. A streetcar is planned on S. Jackson St to the west.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is for the design and construction of a 6,000 square foot three-story office building to allow Casa Latina, a social service provider, to better serve its clientele base. The building would include two stories of office use for Casa Latina and one story of retail to be rented to tenants. The two existing structures on the east portion of the site will be retained. Eight parking spaces are proposed at a surface parking lot adjacent to the alley. This surface parking area would be paved in pervious pavers and could serve as an occasional outdoor patio for events.

ANALYSIS – DESIGN REVIEW

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: May 19, 2010

Three alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options included a three story building with office at the upper two stories and office or retail at the street level. All options included a pedestrian pathway connecting the street to the alley, parking accessed from the alley, green roofs, pervious surface parking lot, sunshades, and a metal and hardi-panel material palette. No development departures were requested.

The first scheme (Option A) showed a two-story terraced mass stepping up from South Jackson Street.

The second scheme (Option B) showed the massing includes a one-story mass at the first terrace level then stepping up to three floors on the site's rear half.

The third scheme (Option C) showed the design included loading a three-story mass adjacent to the street with the rear half remaining open to accommodate surface parking and outdoor event spaces. (preferred scheme).

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 11 members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Supported preferred scheme with building mass loaded along Jackson. Street level uses within the proposed building should be retail to activate this portion of Jackson.
- Serious consideration should be made to installing and maintaining pervious surface materials for the parking area. With the adjacency of the residential zone across the alley, the design should be incorporate greening elements to soften the often neglected rear of the development site.
- Would like to see the pedestrian access through the site be maintained as proposed, but would encourage at least an eight foot wide width to allow gathering space while people pass through.
- Architectural features from the surrounding area should influence the proposed building design.
- The proposed building at street level should step back from the property line in alignment with the existing structure at the project site, to maintain the greater openness of the sidewalk width.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION MEETING: March 16, 2011

DESIGN PRESENTATION

The applicant described the changes to the design since EDG, which included:

- Creating a street wall at S. Jackson St to reflect the larger building heights to the east and the older buildings at the street wall to the west.
- The second story office included folding windows to allow this floor to function as an open meeting space with natural ventilation.
- The conceptual signage plan included clean modern building signage with a signature gateway sign mounted over the hill climb stairs.
- The west elevation was designed as a party wall that may be visible for some time but will eventually share a wall with another building. A combination of colored metal panels was proposed at that façade.
- Two art pieces for the east and north walls will be developed by artist Fulgencio Lazo.

- Materials included stack bond buff brick at the lower building levels and east façade, Parlex (a smooth durable finish material that looks like wood), cedar, and metal sun screens.
- Lighting plan includes automatically adjustable parking lot lighting that remains low when there is no parking lot activity, catenary lights above the hill climb, and wall mounted lights with uplighting and downlighting.

The requested departure would allow smaller than required parking spaces for 25% of the spaces proposed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

One member of the public added their name to the Sign-In Sheet at this Design Recommendation meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised by members of the public:

- The elevator should allow people to move through the building from S. Jackson St to the upper levels.
- The proposed composition of glass and solid panels reflects 1950's Mexico City architecture, and the architecture and colors create a positive urban building.
- The trees appear out of scale with the building, but when they are mature they will improve the urban character of this street. The applicant should choose trees that will be good shade trees as they mature, especially given the south-facing façade on S. Jackson St.

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. The Board identified the Citywide Design Guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

The Neighborhood specific guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

A. Site Planning

A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street. Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board directed that the articulation of pedestrian entries should visually announce entries. Emphasis should be directed towards making the building readable, directing pedestrians within the development site to the appropriate destinations with the number of uses proposed. The two street fronts should be as welcoming as possible.

The Board encouraged the applicant to design a building possessing sensitivity to the unique conditions of its three sides: (with the abutting vacant lot to the west) the west facing facade will be highly visible for east approaching traffic for the foreseeable future; multi-family residential zone to the north whose views of the building and surface parking area are significant; and to the south alignment of the façade if design gracefully could encourage a strong pedestrian friendly streetscape along Jackson.

The Board would like to see a high-quality right-of-way design and a landscape plan that endeavors to enhance the pedestrian streetscape. See also E-2.

The surface parking lot should be made of pervious materials and designed in a manner to visually enhance this environment that will also double as a periodic social gathering space (outdoor room) for outdoor functions. The Board would like to see the design of this space and understand how it addresses visual, noise, and security impacts to its neighbors.

The Board supported the preferred design scheme with the building mass shifted towards the Jackson street frontage. However, the massing at street level should align with the adjacent structure to the east to create continuity in defining the street edge along Jackson.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the applicant explained that the proposed stair connection from S. Jackson St to the upper parking lot/plaza will be the new primary entry for pedestrians entering the site. The primary office entry will be through a new door cut in the existing southeast building on the site, facing the parking area.

Given the desire to bring pedestrians up the stairs to the primary entry, the Board recommended a condition to include additional transparency on the east façade of the proposed building. The Board also recommended a condition to place the artwork in an area of the façade that will create maximum visibility for users and passerby. The Board also recommended a condition to use low height planting and potentially place planters on either side of the staircase to enhance the sense of entry. The purpose of these conditions is to create visual interest, safety, and a welcoming entry to the Casa Latina buildings.

A-4 Human Activity. New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.

See A-3 comments for Board Guidance and Recommendation.

A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites. Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.

See A-3 comments for Board Guidance and Recommendation.

A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access. Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties, and pedestrian safety.

See A-3 comments for Board Guidance and Recommendation.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

C-1 Architectural Context. New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board encouraged the design team to move away from replicating the existing structure along Jackson. Take cues (“riff-off”) from the existing structure to inform a new design language. The proposed structure should be designed to gracefully fit within a development site with two existing buildings in a manner that spatially integrates social spaces.

The Board emphasized exploring opportunities of providing sustainable design elements including cross ventilation and daylighting.

At the next meeting, the applicant should provide well-detailed materials and color palette - Use of high quality, durable and well-detailed materials are critical elements to the overall success of the project. They look forward to reviewing a permanent, well-detailed material and color palette. The Board suggested that a design approach to green-up with an emphasis on pedestrian amenities in and around the proposed parking/outdoor room would work well, adjacent to the residential zoned properties (north) across the alley.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board noted the appropriate use of materials and colors at the west façade, given the location of the wall on the property line. The Board also appreciated the composition of materials and fenestration on the north façade.

The Board discussed how these areas compliment the overall architectural concept. The Board discussed the architectural composition of the “C-shaped wrapper” visible from the south façade. They noted that this expression seems to be replicated on the north façade in a different form that isn’t consistent with the composition on the south façade.

The Board recommended that the applicant modify the second story extension at the north façade to create consistency with the architectural concept. One possible method to achieve this is use of a lighter more ‘minor’ material for the extension, similar to the appearance of the sun shades at the south façade.

The Board noted that the use of Parlex on the south and east facades is too close in color to the proposed cedar siding, and distracts from the architectural concept and consistency. The Board recommended a condition to use a Parlex color that identifies it as distinct from the cedar siding.

The Board also discussed the second story fenestration on the south facade, and the way the windows at this level don’t appear to relate well to the overall architectural concept. The Board appreciated the functionality of the accordion windows at the second story, but recommended a better composition that relates to the architectural concept of the upper two stories. The placement of windows on the north façade, or the third story of the south façade, both relate well to the overall architectural concept.

C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency. Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.

See C-1 comments for Board Guidance and Recommendation.

C-3 Human Scale. The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements, and details to achieve a good human scale.

See C-1 comments for Board Guidance and Recommendation.

C-4 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.

See C-1 comments for Board Guidance and Recommendation.

D. Pedestrian Environment

D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances. Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry 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. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the importance of the sidewalk street experience by maintaining the setback from the front property line of the existing structure along Jackson Street for the proposed structure. By stepping the structure back from the property line, the design will visually open up the proposed pedestrian stair access to the street - creating a stoop-like appearance.

The Board expects the stair climb set between the proposed and existing buildings will be designed with safety in mind. The stair access should accommodate people who both want to linger and who want to pass through. In the evening this area should be well illuminated if it is to remain open. The stair access is an important design element in the overall design composition and should be treated as such, with an eye on detail.

The Board was pleased that all of the proposed parking will be located in the rear and accessed off of the alley. The surface parking lot may double as a public outdoor room on special occasions. The Board stressed the importance of connecting this dual use area with existing and proposed structures; the success of this space will be dependent on placing individuals first and designing accordingly.

The specifics of garbage and recycling service areas were not detailed. This area should be screened or located in a manner to lessen its impact upon neighboring properties. The Board would like to know specifically where the compacter and waste dumpster will be located and how it will be managed on pickup days.

Designing the ground level commercial space to create a vibrant retail use is critical. The ground level should have large transparent storefront windows. The upper level fenestration should differ from that of the base in pattern and size.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board discussed the pedestrian stair and plaza and noted that these areas should be welcoming, use low planting, include additional transparency on the east façade of the building, use the art piece and landscaping to create a sense of arrival, and use signage to clearly bring people up to the main Casa Latina entry facing the parking lot. The planters could be located on both sides of the pedestrian stair to create seating walls and a welcoming entry to the building. These conditions were described in response to Guideline A-3.

The Board discussed the proposed trash and recycling location and screening, and determined that it appeared to meet Design Guidelines.

The Board noted that the existing buildings' entries are currently unclear, and the proposed development would create one primary Casa Latina entry facing the parking area. The primary entry should be easily accessible to all users, including those who may have difficulty accessing the entry via the staircase. The Board recommended a condition for the applicant to demonstrate that the primary entry will be accessible to all users.

- D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas. Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.**

See D-1 comments for Board Guidance and Recommendation.

- D-7 Personal Safety and Security. Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.**

See D-1 comments for Board Guidance and Recommendation.

- D-8 Treatment of Alleys. The design of alley entrances should enhance the pedestrian street front.**

See D-1 comments for Board Guidance and Recommendation.

- D-10 Commercial Lighting. Appropriate levels of lighting should be provided in order to promote visual interest and a sense of security for people in commercial districts during evening hours. Lighting may be provided by incorporation into the building façade, the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, in landscaped areas, and/or on signage.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board didn't mention this item since the use at the street level wasn't yet determined.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board recommended a condition to provide additional lighting at the retail canopy on S. Jackson St.

D-11 Commercial Transparency. Commercial storefronts should be transparent, allowing for a direct visual connection between pedestrians on the sidewalk and the activities occurring on the interior of a building. Blank walls should be avoided.

See D-1 comments for Board Guidance and Recommendation.

E. Landscaping

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that they looked forward to reviewing a well-detailed landscape plan that includes a green roof and dense vegetation. At grade, the Board encouraged using landscaping to soften the transition between the site and the residential zone to the north.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board discussed the landscaping and recommended a condition to create low height landscaping as described in response to Guideline A-3 and possibly include planters on either side of the staircase as described in response to Guideline D-1.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURE

- 1. Parking stall size (23.54.015):** The Code requires seven parking spaces, and requires that 75% of the spaces are "large" size spaces and 25% of the spaces are "small" size spaces. The applicant proposes to provide eight parking spaces that meet "medium" stall dimensions. The proposed stalls would be 8'6" wide x 18' long. The parking area would be paved with pervious pavers and landscaped to allow the parking lot to function as an occasional outdoor plaza area.

This departure would provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines A-8 and D-1, as conditioned below, by providing a parking area that can function as attractive open space for Casa Latina and tenants.

The Board unanimously recommended that DPD grant the departure, subject to the conditions listed below.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation summarized below was based on the design review packet dated March 16, 2011, and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the March 16, 2011 Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and initial recommendation conditions, and reviewing the plans and renderings, the six Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design and the requested development standard departure from the requirements of the Land Use Code (listed above). The Board recommends the following CONDITIONS (Authority referred in the letter and number in parenthesis):

1. The landscaping flanking the pedestrian stair connecting S. Jackson St to the upper parking area shall be low enough height to permit full visibility from windows facing the staircase and allow maximum visibility through the pedestrian connection. (A-3, A-4, A-5, A-8, D-1, D-7, D-11, E-2)
2. Consider additional planters on either side of the staircase to enhance the sense of entry. (A-3, A-4, A-5, A-8, D-1, D-7, D-11, E-2)
3. Include additional transparency on the east façade of the proposed building. (A-3, A-4, A-5, A-8, D-1, D-7, D-11)
4. Place the artwork in an area of the façade that will create maximum visibility for users and passerby. (A-3, A-4, A-5, A-8, D-1, D-7, D-11)
5. Modify the second story extension at the north façade to create consistency with the architectural concept. (C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4)
6. Use a Parlex color that identifies it as a distinct material from the cedar siding. (C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4)
7. Modify the windows at the second story of the south façade, consistent with the architectural concept. (C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4)
8. The applicant shall demonstrate that the primary Casa Latina entry will be accessible to all users. (D-1, D-7, D-8)
9. Provide additional lighting at the retail canopy on S. Jackson St. (D-10)

DECISION – DESIGN REVIEW

The proposed design and Development Standard Departures are **CONDITIONALLY GRANTED**, subject to the conditions listed below.

SEPA

Environmental review resulting in a Threshold Determination is required pursuant to the Seattle State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), WAC 197-11, and the Seattle SEPA Ordinance (Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 25.05)

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant dated November 9, 2010. The Department of Planning and Development has analyzed and annotated the environmental checklist submitted by the project applicant; reviewed the project plans and any additional information in the file; and pertinent comments which may have been received regarding this proposed action have been considered.

As indicated in the checklist, this action may result in adverse impacts to the environment. However, due to their temporary nature and limited effects, the impacts are not expected to be significant.

Codes and development regulations applicable to this proposed project will provide sufficient mitigation and no further conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE

This decision was made after review by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and form. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirement of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21.C), including the requirement to inform the public of agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

[X] Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21.030(2) (c).

The lead agency for this proposal has determined that it does not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required under RCW [43.21C.030](#) (2)(c). This decision was made after review of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the lead agency. This information is available to the public on request.

- There is no comment period for this DNS.
- This DNS is issued after using the optional DNS process in WAC [197-11-355](#) and Early review DNS process in SMC 25.05.355. There is no further comment period on the DNS.
- This DNS is issued under WAC [197-11-340](#)(2); the lead agency will not act on this proposal for 14 days after the date of issuance of a DNS.

DESIGN REVIEW CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

Prior to Issuance of a Master Use Permit

1. The landscaping flanking the pedestrian stair connecting S. Jackson St to the upper parking area shall be low enough height to permit full visibility from windows facing the staircase and allow maximum visibility through the pedestrian connection.
2. Planters shall be included on the sides of the staircase leading from S. Jackson St to the north parking lot.

