

EARLY DESIGN GUIDELINES

OF

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD 7

May 7, 2003

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number: 2204305

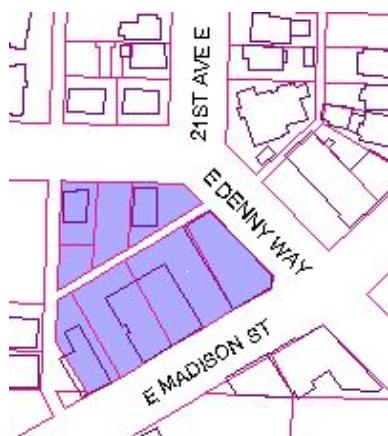
Address: 2040 E. Madison St.

Applicant: Slater Partners, Jay Reves, Architect

Board members: Jack Schwaegler
Wes Larson
Rob Humble
Gregory Wharton
Annie Han

Land Use Planner present: Scott Kemp

This early design guidance meeting was conducted for a proposed mixed use development on a site zoned NC3-65' and NC2R-65', which is nearly flat and bordered by E. Madison St. on the south, by E. Denny Way on the east and north and by a 16 foot wide alley on the west. Across the approximate center of the site is another alley segment, this one 10 feet wide and the subject



of an alley right-of-way vacation petition. To the west of the subject site, across the alley from the site a new mixed use building has been constructed along Madison. Structures on the remainder of the block are older, low scale commercial and residential buildings.

Several large buildings have recently been built in the immediate vicinity. One is the handsome Planned Parenthood Building. Kitty corner from the site a large mixed-use project is under construction which will contain a Safeway grocery store on the ground level.

The proposed development would be six stories tall, contain approximately 200 residential units, 1200 sq. ft. of commercial space and take vehicular access from the alley along the western edge of the site.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Public comment was received at the design review meeting. One factor which was pointed out relates to compatibility of the proposed development with the lowrise multi-family residential area to the north across E. Denny Way. Guidelines relating to respect for adjacent sites, responding to architectural context and designing to control the appearance of height, bulk and scale were cited as ones the Board should pay particular attention to. A commenter stated that when the proposal site was rezoned from a 40 foot height limit to one with 65 foot height limit the public was assured that the height, bulk and scale impacts could be controlled through design review of any development proposal. The potential loss of green opens space provided by portions of the site was lamented by some. Others indicated they would be glad to see a crime ridden condition along the alley across the site alleviated by new development. A commenter suggested that building massing be concentrated towards E. Madison St.

PRIORITIES:

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 siting and design guidance described below and identified 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. The recommendations made were agreed to by all five of the Board members present, unless otherwise noted.

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 site presents a prominent corner at E. Madison St. and E. Denny Way with a very commercial environment along E. Madison transitioning to one with a residential character to the north along the two segments of E. Denny way. The alley crossing the site from west to east creates a line at which a break in building massing and creation of open space elements seems appropriate.

A-2 Streetscape compatibility - The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.

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

Again the very different character of the residential and commercial areas around the site dictates a very different building form. Commercial frontages are called for to the south and residential entries, open spaces, porches, townhouse looking fronts, etc. are called for to the north.

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

Commercial fronts along E. Madison should be designed to have transparency to the sidewalk and to connect to the sidewalk realm through entries directly onto it. The provision of public open space designed to be used by the commercial uses along with the public sidewalk is encouraged.

The street level residential portions of the project along E. Denny Way should also be visually and physically connected to the sidewalk area. The ground level in front of the multi-family building should be within the realm of use of the residents of the units immediately adjacent thereto.

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.

Use of the alley for vehicle access to the site seems appropriate.

B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility - Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to near-by, less-intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.

The six story tall development proposed for the site is of a far greater height, bulk and scale than that existing in areas to the north or likely to be developed there in the foreseeable future. In addition the long street frontages of the proposal site will make possible buildings of great scale. The architectural design and building massing should create a building which creates an appropriate appearance of height, bulk or scale as compared with the L-4 zoned properties across E. Denny Way. Lowrise Four zones have a 37 foot height limit with an additional five feet allowed for pitched roofs of at least 4:12 pitch.

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.

Along E. Madison St. the structure should have a formal and traditional appearance with a unity of design between the base and the upper levels. A “wedding cake” approach to upper setbacks must be avoided on the Madison street side.

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

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.

Design elements at the base must create attractive, comfortable human spaces, commercial in character to the west and residential to the east and north. Elements in the residential portions should include masonry planters, garden areas, steps and porches, and visibility between interior spaces and the sidewalk. Elements along the commercial areas should include overhead weather protection, announced entries, and areas where the sidewalk is expanded into the site and where uses within the building animate the public realm by using it for commercial purposes; putting people on the sidewalks and interior spaces.

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.

Choice of appropriate materials, along with strong, successful architectural expression, will be important in creating a highly successful building. Smaller scale expressions should be utilized in creating a human scale in areas where pedestrians are expected. Brick masonry is an established element of other successful buildings in the immediate area and should be incorporated at the base two levels with some use of it further up to tie the building together vertically.

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 can not 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.

A successful plan for dealing with these elements should be shown in subsequent meetings.

E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site - Landscaping, including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen wall, planter, site furniture and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.

Landscaping should be placed at publicly visible locations. Landscaping places along the street or along interior public paths “pays high dividends.”

Development Standard Departures

The applicant disclosed one potential departure from development standards desired in order to achieve a better designed project. Requested was:

1. To increase the amount of residential lot coverage above 13 feet in height from 64% to approximately 72%.

The Board asked for a demonstration of the benefit which might result from granting this departure. How would the resulting design better accomplish one or more of the Design Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings. The project should creation very high quality, public pedestrian spaces on the site serving both the residents of the building and the public at large in a highly accessible area thereby accomplishing the objective of residential open spaces in a better way. Design and execution of these spaces will be critical in the Board’s evaluation of any such departure rational. Another rational may be to make up for floor area lost in measures to articulate the northern facades in order to create an appropriate height, bulk and scale relation to the L-4 zoned properties across the street.