

Recommendations of
Design Review Board for Greater Capitol Hill
December 13, 2000

Background Information:

Project Number: 9901819

Address: 514 19th Ave. E

Applicant: Tim Walker

Board Members Present: Tom Phillips

Joy Jacobson

Carol Tobin (at large member)

Board Members Absent: Merv Gorasht

Barb Gregory

Audrey Van Horne

DCLU Staff Present: Bob McElhose

Project Description:

The site for this proposal is mid-block along 19th Ave. E, between E Mercer St. and E Republican St. The site is currently vacant with some fill in place. The zoning is NC1-40' (Neighborhood Commercial 1, with a 40' height limit), as it is along the 19th Ave. E block front, with L-1 (Lowrise multifamily residential, with a 25' height limit) to the east across the alley.

The proposal is to construct a four-story mixed-used structure. Retail or customer-service type office space is proposed at the street level, with 42 residential units above, and two levels of below grade parking with 54 parking spaces with access from the alley. Structural building overhangs in the form of bay windows and decks will be proposed over the street right-of-way.

Design Departures Requested:

The applicant is asking for modifications for upper level lot coverage for the residential portion of the building, the code allowing 64% coverage, and the applicant is asking for 72.5% to allow for a greater mix of unit types.

Originally, the proposal was to seek departures from open space and landscaping quantities and location, driveway width and alley setback, but the current design meets those requirements and needs no modifications.

Old Business

1. Early Design Guidance meeting on October 20, 1999

PRIORITIES:

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance 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:

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

The proposed four-story structure should respond to the edge condition across the alley from multi-family zoned residential property, and should be keeping in character with the older buildings along the street. Placing the retail uses at the sidewalk is important to help keep activity levels high along the street. Interesting details and quality materials should be used where visible from the street. There is approximately 10' of grade change down to the east. All parking access should come from the alley.

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

There should be clearly identifiable entries for the residential and commercial uses, with their own identities, and a clear distinction between them. Some Board discussion revolved around using the residential entry as an opportunity for some landscaping and gathering space. The commercial entries should make the businesses approachable.

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

19th Ave. E is a minor pedestrian oriented arterial, and there should be activity and design that encourages pedestrian interaction. The Board liked the idea of retail close to the sidewalk, making for a safer and more enjoyable experience visiting the site, and more viable retail space.

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.

The Board discussed the existing building to the south, and how this project should deal sensitively with light, air, and privacy because that structure is built right to the property line. There was also discussion regarding the property to the north, which is well suited for improvements, and that property should be considered as well for light, air and privacy for future development.

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.

Of particular interest to the Board are the front and rear of this project. As there is a less-intensive residential zone across the alley, the façade facing the alley should be, in effect, a second front. That façade should have all of the detailing, including decks, bay windows, and other items of architectural interest as any façade facing a street. There should be a good relationship with that residentially zoned property, including the possibility of landscaping along the alley. The street front façade should be inviting, with a clear relationship to the street and sidewalk that encourages activity at the street. The side facades should not be blank, but should have some windows or other

architectural detailing.

C-1 Architectural Context - New building 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.

There is a lower priority for this concept, as this is a neighborhood in transition, but some effort must be made to complement the existing building stock in the neighborhood.

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.

The Board would like the proposal to use a strong base, with cornices and other details in the upper structure used to reflect the surrounding architecture. There should be an emphasis placed on unifying the design concept.

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.

The Board commented that materials and details were a given, as far as importance. The east side should have the same quality as the west side, and colors should be sensitive to the neighborhood, specifically, no "blah beige".

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 sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.

The Board reiterated the importance of providing opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented entries that are clearly identifiable as entries.

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.

All trash receptacles and dumpsters should be screened and located adjacent to the alley within the garage.

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.

The Board asked the applicant to consider landscaping and possibly open space near the sidewalk.

Departures

The applicant is requesting departures for the amount of open space, landscaping of the open space, the general requirement for open space, driveway width, residential lot coverage, and possibly alley setbacks. At the early pre-design stage of the project, the board was generally not amenable to most departures unless the building was clearly better designed as a result of approving the departures. They will likely allow the narrowing of the driveway for the few commercial parking stalls. There was some consensus that some amount of departure would be possible for the open space, landscaping, and building coverage, but not a complete waiver of those standards. Board members chose to withhold any approvals until the final design is submitted for review and scrutiny.

New Business

Meeting on December 13, 2000

Presentation:

The presentation was provided by Tim Walker WRP Associates, the architect and owner. The presentation started with a review of the last presentation elements including floor plans.

New information provided followed the Design Review Priorities as outlined in the Early Design Guidance Meeting and the Board discussion and comments at the October 20, 1999 meeting. These following responses were given during a presentation of color perspective, color elevations, and presentation boards - a packet of which was given to all Board and Staff members present. The Applicant's presentation is summarized as follows:

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

- Mr. Walker explained that the structure was designed to reflect the patterns and rhythm of the neighborhood, with the structure built to the sidewalk in response to the commercial zoning and street level retail or office and taking cues from the design and materials of surrounding buildings.

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

- The pedestrian entry for the residential and commercial uses is directly from the sidewalk, with a clear identity. The vehicles enter from the alley only to reinforce the street entry identity.

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

- Placing the entry at the sidewalk with minimal setback reinforces the pedestrian level activity, and invites interactions along the street. This makes for a more social and safe environment.

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.

- As above, the design reflects the patterns of the neighborhood, with colors chosen to complement surrounding structures while remaining a modern design.
- Courtyards are used on the side façades to soften bulk, provide landscaping and open space opportunities, and are placed in a manner that reflects the location of similar courtyards on the adjacent building.

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 terracing and landscaping of the rear of the building and incorporating "front" of the building design details at the alley help make a friendly transition to the housing across the alley.
- Certain of the details on the front of the building, notably the bay windows and façade details, are carried out on the rear as well, creating a structure that provides an orderly transition between the zones while maintaining the structures design integrity.

- Those same details reflect details in surrounding commercially zoned properties.

C-1 Architectural Context - New building 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.

- As above, the design was chosen to complement the neighborhood, while looking ahead to the future, setting a context for future development.
- Materials include brick, bevel siding, bay windows and parapets much as the older structures in the neighborhood.
- Windows are set at the same levels as the building immediately adjacent to this one.

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.

- See C-1 above.

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 above.

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.

- The entry is recessed, while the building is constructed right at the sidewalk, creating a lively environment with an area of repose, with a clear sense of entry.
- High quality materials will be utilized at the street, with lighting and other amenities designed to make the space comfortable and secure.
- The recess at the entrance will provide weather protection.

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.

- The dumpster and recycling will be located of the alley and screened.

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.

- The courtyards on the side facades will be visible from the street.
- Street trees will be provided.

- The rear façade and terraces will be landscaped.
- Planters may be incorporated in the final design of the entrance.

Public Comment:

Various members of the public audience spoke at times some praising the project, but some members of the public objected to the scale of the project and the use of the alley to access parking. Neighbors directly across the alley and across 19th were pleased with the architect's responses to earlier concerns. The owner of the clinic across the street mentioned a concern about construction workers blocking her parking, an issue which is outside the scope of Design Review. The owner of the apartment to the south thought the design was well done and compatible with his structure, but some tenants were not in favor of the project as proposed. Some of the positive comments were directed at the quality of materials and the attention paid to the alley "front" of the building, which along with the landscaped terraces creates a complementary transition to the L-1 properties across the alley. Audience members liked the mix of unit types as well, stating that diversity of income levels and tenants added to the neighborhood mix. Some of the comments stated the opinion that more amenities should be proposed in exchange for considering relaxing the lot coverage standard. One neighbor appreciated the attention paid to the rear façade, but asked if the architect would consider brick there as well as the front instead of the split-face cmu. Glare at the alley from parking lights should be minimized as well, said the neighbors.

Board Discussion:

The Board was pleased with the overall design, but questioned the modification for upper level lot coverage. Joy asked the architect why the Board should entertain the modification of lot coverage. Tim Walker replied that the difference, 800 sf of floor area per floor, would allow a wider range of rental units, adding more 1 and two bedroom units to the mix, and the scale would allow use of better materials. It was noted that 800 sf per floor would result in a total of 3200 additional square feet of units. When asked how the structure would change if the modification were denied, Mr. Walker replied that the courtyards at the sides would become larger, and some of the features such as bay windows would be removed. Board members stated that they felt the bays were important design elements and they should be saved if possible.

Board members asked to see color and material samples, and Mr. Walker presented a board with a color palette and samples. The materials include clinker bricks similar to what is used in the rest of the neighborhood, split-face cmu blocks, concrete tiles and muted green ceramic tiles. The sides of the structure will be faced with hardi-board planks in a dark yellow shade (umber), with accents in shades of tan and brown, rust, and a yellow-green tone. Window frames would be natural aluminum for contrast. The alley façade will be clad in split-face cmu mimicking the brick along the street, but giving a slightly different appearance. The parking would be screened with garage doors and the refuse collection area will be screened and secure within the garage. Landscaping will be used in the courtyards and rear terraces to soften the appearance of the structure, and along with landscaping on the roof, provide pleasant open space for the residents of the apartments.

Board Recommendations:

The Board expressed approval for the project design, but expressed reservations about the requested design departure. Board members were pleased with the efforts to include elements of design found in the neighborhood and the use of materials. It was generally felt that the lot coverage exception requested was excessive, and did not create enough amenities to justify that amount of relief. The Board members agreed that the design fit well into the neighborhood and was respectful of the context, and materials and colors were well chosen.

The Design Review Board members recommended **APPROVAL** of the subject design and the requested development standard departures from the requirements of the Land Use Code, specifically as follows:

1. The Board **APPROVED** the project, with the condition that upper level lot coverage be reduced from the proposed 72.5%. Members agreed to allow some modification of the lot coverage, but no specific number was given, but gave a general direction of approving approximately half as much relief as was requested, leaving the final amount to the discretion of the Planner in charge of the project for DCLU.

2. The Board members present approved the project design as shown on December 13, 2000.