

CITY OF OLYMPIA
Olympia Design Review Board

CONCEPT DESIGN REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
March 13, 2014

- Case:** 4th Avenue Mixed Use Building - 14-0015
(Former Approved Case # 08-0117)
- Site Address:** 123- 4th Avenue West
- Applicant:** Columbia Heights Partners, LLC
66 S. Hanford Street, Suite 300
Seattle, Washington 98134
- Representative:** Kent Smutny, Veer Architecture, 600 108th Ave. NE,
Suite 503, Bellevue, Washington 98004
- Project Description:** New seven-story mixed use building with 138-market rate residential apartments, approximately 7,600-square foot ground floor commercial space along all street frontages, and structured parking for 121-vehicles
- Zoning District:** Downtown Business (DB); including Pedestrian Street Overlay District Downtown Historic and Design Review Districts
- Comprehensive Plan:** Downtown Business (DB)
- Scenic Vista:** None.
- Critical Areas:** None.
- SEPA Determination:** A Mitigated-Determination of Non-significance was issued for the project on September 18, 2008. There was an appeal and the Hearing Examiner up-held the staff decision. That decision became final. Appropriately, due to the passage of time, the applicant has submitted a new checklist with associated updated transportation analysis. The environmental review of this proposal has not yet been completed, therefore, as typical with Concept Design review, the SEPA determination is not yet known.

NOTIFICATION: Notice was mailed to the adjacent property owners within 300 feet of the project, to the recognized neighborhood associations in the area, and to former parties

of record on February 18, 2014. City staff will host a March 6th neighborhood informational meeting.

Adjacent Development/Project Context: This site is within the Downtown Historic District and comprises approximately the western half of the city block that is bordered on the north by 4th Avenue, on the east by Capitol Way, on the south by 5th Avenue, and on the west by Columbia Street. A small restaurant (New Moon Café – historic inventory “Red Top Taxi”) and former Schoenfeld’s furniture store (south portion was historic inventory “Yenny’s” Music”) are on the northeast corner of the block, Olympia Federal Savings occupies the southeast corner of the block (historic information only), separated from the former furniture store by a surface parking lot and the subject site by a 10-foot wide alley/sidewalk. To the south is retail (the historic inventory Dufault Building), restaurant and bar (the historic inventory “Shanghai Café”). To the southwest and west are two banks (both historic information only). To west is a restaurant (historic inventory “Harbst Tire Store”) and retail store (historic inventory “Barnes Building”). To the northwest is a restaurant with housing above (historic inventory “Angelus Hotel”). To the north is a surface parking lot, restaurant (historic inventory “Weidner Rummy Club”) retail, commercial and office in the Olympia Historic Registered “Mottman Building.”

Existing Site Conditions: The generally flat paved parking lot is managed by the City on-behalf of the owner and is striped for hourly and leased monthly customer parking, with strip drains, parking meters and overhead lighting.

Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) Comments: The land use proposal is currently under review by SPRC and concept design review is part of that review. SPRC previously approved the project on September 18, 2008 (File # 08-0117). SPRC will review the project and prior decision for conformance with zoning (no code changes) and Engineering Development Design Standards (EDDS – which have some changes). The changes to the project include:

- Adding 15-residential apartment units (from 123 to 138 units - no change in square feet) by reducing the size and unit type count mix;
- Raising the building height by 5-feet (from 78-feet to approximately 83-feet);
- Replacing previously approved Columbia Street level structured parking with street front retail. As discussed below, adding the ground level retail to the Columbia Street frontage addresses the point of concern with the 2008 project application.

One additional change made by the City and not the applicant, is to reduce west bound 5th Avenue from two-lanes to one. As a result, the sidewalk width will be increased from the existing 10-foot to up to 18-foot. The SPRC decision will combine land use review, environmental review, concept design review and EDDS.

DESIGN ISSUES:

Conceptual Design Review involves the major design elements of a project which includes site analysis and contextual response, site development, and architectural and

landscape concepts as they relate to the general Citywide design criteria and the specific design criteria of the design district.

The section called “How to Use Design Guidelines (OMC 18.100.100)” in the Olympia Municipal Code encourages creative solutions in meeting the requirements as long as these design solutions **are equal to or better than** the guidelines listed below the Requirement Sections.

Tonight the Board is being asked to review the revisions since the 2008-Detailed Design Review and SPRC Decision. As stated above, the primary issue as it relates to Concept Design Review is the addition of ground level retail along the Columbia Street frontage which increases conformance with the intent of the pedestrian overlay district.

Although environmental soil and ground water clean-up was the primary thrust of an Appeal to the prior approval, among others, design issues were included. Specifically, 1) roof-top protrusions for stairways (previously addressed under Detailed Design Review); 2) Concern regarding the Historic District (also previously addressed under Detailed Design Review); and 3) Request to reinstate the Design Review Board’s recommendation to SPRC that:

“The applicant “Redesign the Columbia Street elevation to comply with Pedestrian “A” street requirements, specifically OMC 18.16.080(J)(2)(b).”

which the SPRC decision did not include. In summary, the Examiner ruled in favor of the SPRC Decision recognizing that:

Staff considered the Design Review Committee’s conditions C & D to be a misinterpretation of the Pedestrian Street requirements, specifically 18.16.080(J)(2)(b), which states: “If there are multiple pedestrian street frontages, this option [enclosed occupiable space for pedestrian-oriented uses or businesses] should be used on the dominant pedestrian street frontage.” (Emphasis added.) SPRC considered the Board’s recommendation during the review of the proposal, and determined the code meant that only one street needed to meet the requirement, since “the dominant” is singular in nature. Since the applicant’s proposal met the requirement for enclosed occupiable space on both 4th and 5th Avenues that wrapped around onto Columbia street, the requirement was met, and the applicant did not need to meet the requirement along the entire Columbia Street frontage. Therefore, the design recommendation was replaced by the SPRC with the following:

Provide façade treatment on the Columbia Street side of the building that includes architectural details, a trellis with climbing or vertical vegetation, display windows, or art. This treatment must cover at least 60% of the wall between two and eight feet

above the sidewalk. If display windows are proposed, provide details of size, including depth, and proposed use.

Staff notes that 4th and 5th Avenues were deemed “Dominant” due to the fact that they have higher pedestrian and traffic volumes. The decision was also supported as consistent with replacing 4 driveways with useable retail spaces and the 4th and 5th Avenue occupiable spaces that wrapped around the corners onto Columbia by 4th and 5th Avenue.

Although those issues were litigated and the City Decision was upheld, the revised proposal before the Board tonight adds the commercial retail along the Columbia Street frontage which brings the proposal into greater conformity with the intent of the Pedestrian Street overlay district and the former recommendation of the Joint Design Review Committee.

City staff re-evaluated the project based on the attached Checklists of Design Requirements and Guidelines (OMC 18.110 Basic Commercial, 18.120 Commercial Downtown, and 18.05 Historic Structures and Buildings within Historic Districts) which are the purview of the Design Review Board. Staff is also in the process of evaluating the proposal for compliance with the Pedestrian Street Overlay District, Chapter 18.16 which is not the purview of the Board. In summary, staff has determined that the proposal is more in compliance with the intent of the Concept Design Review Requirements as follows:

- 18.105.030 requires that new “Structures Within a Historic District” will preserve the historic context and merit of the district. As previously determined the applicant:
 - Used roof forms that emulate the historic property roof form;
 - Used windows, materials, relief and details similar to the historic property;
 - Used similar:
 - Facade modulation.
 - Repeating window patterns at intervals equal to the articulation interval.
 - Provided small balcony decks, outdoor roof-top patio and covered entry to the articulation interval.
 - Provided balcony or bay window for each interval.
 - Changed the roofline by alternating elements to reinforce the modulation or articulation interval.
 - At Detailed Design Review they:
 - Provided lighting fixture, trellis, tree or other landscape feature within each interval
 - Using paint and material colors that blend with the historic property.
 - Using landscape materials and plantings that are similar to those used on the historic property.

- The proposed retail on all three street frontages meet the prior Concept Design Review requirements and the applicant will address associated facade revisions with the Detailed Design Review application. The residential portion of the building (levels 2 through 7) met the design requirements on all sides of the building. The change in unit count may result in some alterations (such as window pattern) which will also be addressed as part of Detailed Design Review.
- Section 18.110.090 requires either clear glass at street level or some other façade treatment that would provide pedestrian interest along the street wall. Since the parking garage will be hidden by retail, revised Columbia Street architectural details will need to be submitted for Detailed Design Review.
- Section 18.120.050 requires building design must have pedestrian oriented businesses or shops, corner entries, and building edges abutting the sidewalk. The revised proposal complies with each of these.
- Section 18.120.070 requires the building design and rhythm must create a visually interesting street wall both horizontally and vertically. Except for required alterations to the street level Columbia Street frontage which will be the subject of detailed design review, the remainder of the proposal continues to comply.
- 18.120.130 requires visual linkages between adjacent properties. Although the building is proposed to be seven stories tall, which is allowed in the zone, which is taller than any of the adjacent buildings, it shares common elements of setbacks, similar proportions of building components, and similar materials.
- 18.16.080(F) - Blank wall limitations include avoiding the creation of blank walls and dull facades and require at least one wall treatment from the five listed at the time of detailed design review.
- 18.16.080(G) requires a prominent entry that conveys a clear sense of arrival and that uses high quality products that contribute to the richness and detail of the facade. As previously approved, the residential entry has an angled façade, glass, and an awning. To provide that clear sense of arrival, some additional details were provided at the 2008 Detailed Design Review. These details will again be shown at detail design review stage.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the Columbia Heights's 4th Avenue Mixed Use Building Concept Design proposal with the following conditions:

- A. **Context Plan:** Approve as proposed. No change from prior approval.

- B. Preliminary Site & Landscape Design:** Approve as proposed. Provide details of any changes to landscape treatment along the Columbia Street building frontage that ties all three sides of the building together at the time of Detail Design Review.
- C. Preliminary Building Design:**
1. Provide details of building colors and materials, windows, lighting, and other details as noted below for Detail Design Review.
 2. Provide revised façade treatment on the Columbia Street building frontage that ties all three sides of the building together.

Submitted By: Steven Friddle, Principal Planner
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Attachments:

1. Staff Report (for numbering consistency with Legistar)
2. General Land Use Application
3. Plan Set (reduced)
4. Checklists revisions in **red ink for 3/13/14 meeting** (from 8/28/08 Concept meeting notes in **black ink** and 7/23/09 Detailed meeting notes in **green ink**):
 - Chapter 18.110 Basic Commercial
 - Chapter 18.120 Commercial Downtown
 - Chapter 18.105.020 Structures within an Historic District;
 - Chapter 18.16 Pedestrian Street Overlay District.
5. Historic District Preservation Notes and Inventory Documents
6. September 18, 2008 SEPA MDNS & Land Use Decision