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Project 3020114: 6726 Greenwood Ave N
Summary of comments presented at 1.11.16 EDG meeting [corrected]

Dear Michael and Design Review Board:

I was the first speaker at the 2nd EDG meeting tonight. The following points reflect the comments I made at the meeting. Please ensure that these comments are reflected in the summary prepared for this meeting.

- I. The applicant failed to adequately address the concerns identified by the board at the 1st EDG meeting, failed to provide items and information specifically requested by the Board, and failed to offer designs that comply with the applicable design guidance. As a result, another EDG meeting should be required before this project moves forward.
- II. Every design presented failed to comply with applicable design guidelines, specifically Phinney Ridge guidelines for zone edges (CS.2.II): increase setback at ground level; reduce bulk of upper floors; reduce overall height, use extensive landscaping.
- III. Every design presented failed to comply with Seattle Design Guidelines CS2.D.5 (Height, Bulk, Scale; Respect for Adjacent Sites): minimize disrupting the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings. Every design instead included 2nd floor balconies right at the property line, a design feature specifically deemed "inappropriate" in the graphic accompanying this guideline.
- IV. The following lists the Board's concerns and requests from the first EDG, and the applicant's inadequate response.

1. The Board requested "clarification of what real discrete choices were contained in the so-called options" from the first EDG meeting and requested three options that were responsive to the Board's guidance from the 1st EDG.

- The applicant provided basically the identical designs just re-labeled and presented in different order, moved even closer to the property line with increased overall height and false choices about how to accommodate the board's requests

- Option A is basically the same as Option B from October with U-shaped upper levels and interior courtyard. It is the only design with a loading area requested by the board. But the cost of that was (1) pushing the entire 1st floor to within 1-2 feet of the rear property line instead of the 5-ft setback for most of the building that was present in October, and (2) adding numerous 2nd floor balconies all along the rear property line. Both of those designs violate the applicable design guidelines and ignore the Board's stated concerns about setbacks and zone transition.
- Option B replaced Option D from October, which was the only option that had upper level setbacks along the SE and SW sides. This is the only option that offered 15-ft upper level setbacks that the Board requested and the code requires. But the cost of that was pushing most of the ground floor to within approximately a foot from the rear line with 2nd floor balconies extending almost to the line and never more than 5 feet back. As with Option A, this violates the applicable design guidelines and ignores the Board's stated concerns about setbacks and zone transition
- Option C, the preferred option is basically same as the preferred option A offered in October. The Board viewed that option as a useful starting point for a successful design, but the new version is virtually unchanged. **It does not offer the requested loading area, it does not provide the requested 15-foot setbacks, it does not address the concerns about ground floor setbacks.**
- These are the only changes in the current Option C compared to the version presented in October:
 - 1) Moved the 13-ft ground floor wall at the northern part to approximately 1-2 feet from the adjacent rear garage, instead of right at the line. But a person cannot walk in that narrow space, the rear garage cannot be maintained, and emergency personnel could not safely enter or exit that space to rescue the occupants if a fire broke out in the hallway and prevented interior escape.
 - 2) Retained the three 2nd floor decks extending right to the building edge, looming over the single family backyard, the exact design that is deemed "inappropriate" and violates CS2.D.5;
 - 3) Reduced the so-called the "generous setback" at the upper levels in the southern 2/3 to 23-25 feet from the rear line, down from 29 feet in October;
 - 4) Reduced the commercial space to 3,700 sq ft from the 4,000 sq ft in October, with the smallest commercial space of any of the options presented;

- 5) Reduced the already tiny size of the ground floor residential units to squeeze in an additional unit;
 - 6) Provided bike storage in a space barely larger than illustrated in October, yet now claiming to provide space for 22 bikes with no evidence how that was calculated. The Board had specifically articulated the need for bike storage. The bike storage area is not significantly larger than the October version, yet now it is claimed to provide 22 spaces, substantially more than stated in October, with no evidence of how that was calculated.
 - 7) Added four feet to the height with new clerestories even though the Phinney guidelines for Zone edges suggest REDUCING the overall height of the structure and reducing the bulk of the upper floors nearest the SF zone
2. The board requested a site survey including elevational notations.
 - None was provided
 3. The board requested a preliminary but detailed landscape plan for the preferred option
 - None was provided in advance of the meeting [the applicant hurriedly discussed one shown publicly for the first time at the meeting]

V. Here is one easy modification they could have made for Option C that would have addressed the board's concerns about rear setbacks, including the requested 15-ft upper level setback:

- Set the northernmost ground floor portion back 10 feet from the eastern property line (instead of 1-2 feet), similar to Isola project across the street;
- Provide 15-ft upper level setbacks in the northern part instead of 10 feet;
- Net difference in units from the offered design: five units out of 57 in the version shown (one ground floor residential, one ground floor live-work, one residential unit on each upper floor). No hardship, and remaining units become more desirable.

VI. These are some of the **main problems with Preferred Option C** in addition to issues stated above:

1. Building height – too tall:

- Clerestories should be removed. They are a needless distraction that look like an additional floor and violate the design guidelines;
- Without the required elevational survey, it is unclear whether extra 4 ft above 40 feet would be allowed per SMC 23.47A.012. or whether it

would block mountain views from the Fini condo to the west (and this is before the clerestories are added to make a 48-foot high building...);

- The clerestories appear to be placed within 10 feet of the northern edge, but the material lacks the required shadow analysis for such a location (no January 21 shadow study included as required by code).

2. Ceiling heights are unclear

- The ground floor does not appear to be 13-ft, despite what was stated at the meeting. See p28 where 13-ft line is higher than the first floor
- Top floor ceilings are disproportionately high (12-14 feet), making for a top-heavy building viewed from outside;
- Ceiling heights of 2nd and 3rd floor are unclear and seem low;

3. Southern wall image is conspicuously omitted from building views on p30.

- Why? It is a 44-48 foot blank wall. See partial image on p31.
- This is unacceptable on a site so prominently viewed from all cars and pedestrians heading north as the arterial Phinney Avenue bends and becomes Greenwood Avenue;
- Variations in building depth on that side should be required, including at a minimum a window into the hallways to provide natural light;
- A light color should be required to minimize the gloom such a wall could inflict on the neighborhood and adjacent properties;
- A setback should be required to allow proper maintenance of the siding over the years.

4. Rear setbacks are inadequate and do not meet current code requirements.

- (See discussion above)

5. Western edge modulation extends beyond the property line over Greenwood Avenue public sidewalk:

- Unclear whether design complies with code SMC 23.53.035.B for structural building overhangs;
- Code requires annual permit from SDOT;
- Code requires structural building overhangs to be removable; as shown, they do not appear to comply;
- Code requires transparency; unclear whether these comply;
- Structural overhangs are prohibited within 15 feet of corners. Southern bay appears to be within 15 feet and would be prohibited, which interferes with the rhythm of the west side design and will require re-design (that should include setback to property line).

6. Fails to address board's concern about vehicle loading and unloading space onsite

7. Unclear where laundry facilities will be located (there is no Laundromat within walking distance or easy bus distance of the site) or whether 55+ dryers will be vented from the building.

Thank you for considering these issues. My concerns about the lack of parking will be addressed in a different forum. But for the record, I am aware of multiple parking garage designs that accommodate at least 17 cars. That number might not sound high for a building with 55 units, but it is approximately the amount of parking available on the entire block of Phinney Avenue behind this building.

Sincerely,

/s/

Esther Bartfeld

Phinney Ridge resident