

APPROVED

**CITY OF EDMONDS
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN BOARD
*Minutes of Regular Meeting***

September 4, 2013

Chair Gootee called the meeting of the Architectural Design Board to order at 7:00 p.m., at the City Council Chambers, 250 - 5th Avenue North, Edmonds, Washington.

Board Members Present

Bryan Gootee, Chair
Bruce O'Neill, Vice Chair
Brian Borofka
Rick Schaefer
Tom Walker

Board Members Absent

Cary Guenther
Lois Broadway (excused)

Staff Present

Mike Clugston, Senior Planner
Karin Noyes, Recorder

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

BOARD MEMBER SCHAEFER MOVED THAT THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 7, 2013 BE APPROVED AS AMENDED. BOARD MEMBER WALKER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

BOARD MEMBER SCHAEFER MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS SUBMITTED. VICE CHAIR O'NEILL SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

REQUESTS FROM THE AUDIENCE:

No one in the audience indicated a desire to address the Board during this portion of the meeting.

MINOR PROJECTS:

No minor projects were scheduled on the agenda.

PUBLIC HEARINGS - MAJOR PROJECTS:

Phase 1 of a two-phase public hearing process for district based design review of a proposed mixed-use building, including multi-family residential and commercial space for the new Post Office, to be located at 130 – 2nd Avenue North within the Downtown Business (BD2) zone (File Number PLN20130046)

Mr. Clugston presented the Staff Report. He explained the subject property is located in the BD2 zone, which requires a district-based design review. The project also triggered a threshold determination under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), so the application will be reviewed as a two-phased public hearing process. As part of Phase 1, the applicant will provide a preliminary conceptual design and a description of the property to be developed, noting all significant characteristics. The Board will conduct a public hearing and then prioritize the Design Guideline Checklist

(Attachment 4) based upon the information they receive at the hearing, as well the design objectives in the Comprehensive Plan and the Edmonds Community Development Code (ECDC). During Phase 2 of the process, the applicant will design or redesign the initial conceptual proposal to address the input provided by the public and the ADB. The staff will prepare a more detailed analysis of the proposal's compliance with the design guidelines and applicable zoning standards for the second public hearing. The ADB will make a final decision on the application after the second public hearing.

Mr. Clugston advised that the subject property is located at 130 – 2nd Avenue North, just north of the existing post office. The applicant is proposing to construct a new Edmonds post office, with below grade parking, ground-floor retail space for the post office, and approximately 43 residential units on the upper levels. He reminded the Board that the purpose of tonight's meeting is to consider building and site-design aspects and not specific details related to setbacks, height, etc. Following the public hearing, the Board will consider and prioritize each of the items on the Design Guideline Checklist and provide direction to the applicant regarding appearance and functionality of the building and site.

Mr. Clugston noted that the Staff Report includes the following attachments:

1. Land Use Application
2. Applicant's cover letters
3. Preliminary project plans (Phase 1)
4. Design Guideline Checklist and accompanying notes.
5. Downtown Business (BD) Zoning Code (ECDC 16.43)
6. Design Standards for the BD Zones (ECDC 22.43)
7. SEPA Determination of Non-Significance
8. Public notice materials
9. Technical Review Committee comments

Mr. Clugston distributed an additional public comment that was received earlier in the day. The comment was added to the record as Attachment 10.

Mr. Clugston advised that the proposed project will take up the bulk of the site that is located at the corner of Bell Street and 2nd Avenue North. The site was formerly used as a parking lot for the existing post office. Two access points would be provided: one off of 2nd Avenue North and another off of Bell Street. While the proposed commercial uses would not require any on-site parking, one parking space would be required for each residential unit. The applicant is proposing 43 residential units and 77 parking spaces, which would more than meet the parking requirement.

Mr. Clugston clarified that the Determination of Non-Significance does not necessarily mean there will be no impacts. It just means that there won't be any significant impacts that can't be addressed by existing codes and the review process. The appeal period for the SEPA determination expired on September 3rd and no appeals were received.

Mr. Clugston explained that in addition to the Design Guideline Checklist, the zoning (ECDC 16.43) and design (ECDC 22.43) standards for the BD zones, the landscaping standards (ECDC 20.13), and the urban design objectives of the Comprehensive Plan would all be applicable to the project. He noted that these documents would be reviewed more specifically as part of the Phase 2 hearing.

Doug Spee, Property Owner and Applicant, Edmonds 2020 LLC, Edmonds, advised that he developed the building at 307 Bell Street 12 years ago with the purpose of providing attractive apartment housing in downtown Edmonds. He said the project was a great success and the units filled quickly. He found that if people can find an affordable place to rent in downtown Edmonds, they will stay. He said several people approached him with the idea of duplicating the project on the post office site. In addition, the post office had indicated they would leave downtown Edmonds if they could not find a smaller facility. He met with the post office representatives who were very interested in a mixed use

building. He said he tried to fit the two challenges into a single, mixed-use project. The post office liked his proposal and has signed a lease with two renewal options for a total of 20 years.

Mr. Spee explained that the proposed project is intended to offer a complete range of rent rates that will meet the needs of single individuals, couples, and families. The goal is to attract people to live in the unit's long term to add to the quality of the downtown. He emphasized that his project on Bell Street indicates that there is a demand for this type of housing. He said he directed his designer to add amenities to the site such as more natural lighting and ventilation via an open-air courtyard on the inside of the building. The building will be constructed of concrete to be solid and permanent.

Mr. Spee pointed out that the City no longer has parking requirements for commercial uses in the BD zones. However, because the site would be developed as a post office, it is important to provide on-site, covered parking for customers. The ground level, commercial parking area would be completely separate from the residential parking located below grade. He also noted that the residential lobby would be accessed from Bell Street so it is clearly separated from the Post Office entrance.

Mr. Spee said the project would provide an emergency generator in the event of a power outage to supply power to the elevators, garage doors, etc. Not all of the units would be Americans with Disability (ADA) units, but they would all be ADA accessible to meet the code requirements. The units will be similar in size to small and medium-sized condominiums, but they would be rental units.

Scott Boyer, Haller Architects, LLC, Seattle, said he clearly understands the community's sensitivity about height restrictions. The building would be constructed to a height of 30 feet above the average grade, which is consistent with the City's code. This was achieved by using a 6.5-inch thick concrete, post-tension slab at the roof, with 7-inch floor-to-floor slabs that are typical for new construction. The design accommodates a floor-to-floor height of 8 feet for the residential units, and 12 feet for the commercial (post office) space.

Mr. Boyer explained that the proposed building tucks itself into the grade of the site, which has a gentle slope. He noted the four units in the northwest corner, which are double story, with a bedroom loft. As the building tucks itself into the alleyway on the east side, the units come down to grade.

Mr. Boyer said they are currently exploring a variety of materials. They are considering brick for the post office to provide a more formal look. Perhaps stone would be used for the walk up units, and the remaining units could be cement siding for maintenance and upkeep. He emphasized that there would be no blank walls. Plantings would be provided to break up the façades to meet the code requirements. The entryway for the residential units would be located on Bell Street, and each of the residential units would all have a private entrance from the courtyard.

Mr. Boyer noted that the proposed building facades articulate in and out to accommodate the decks so the building design will not have a boxy appearance. However, because of the 30-foot height limit, opportunities for roofline articulation are limited. A projecting concrete roof would be used to provide additional visual interest.

Board Member Schaefer referred to the alley view of the proposed project and asked if the large entrance would be a roll-up door. Mr. Boyer answered affirmatively and advised that this would be the "trash" room. At the request of Vice Chair O'Neill, Mr. Boyer identified the proposed entrance for the residential units, which would be located on Bell Street. He also pointed out the entrance for the Post Office, which would be located on 2nd Avenue North. Vice Chair O'Neill asked if the accesses for the post office and residential parking areas would be both in and out. Mr. Boyer answered affirmatively.

Board Member Borofka asked if the residential parking entrance would be gated. Mr. Boyer answered affirmatively. The gate would be inset, and the design would be open and permeable to allow for garage ventilation. Board Member Borofka asked if the commercial parking area would accommodate both post office employees and patrons. Mr. Boyer

answered affirmatively. Board Member Borofka noted that the walls supporting the awnings above the garage entrances appear to come right out to the sidewalk. He suggested this may create visibility and pedestrian safety issues.

Vice Chair O'Neill asked if a post office customer would be able to drop off a letter without having to park and go inside the post office. Mr. Spee noted that most post offices do not offer this feature, particularly smaller retail stores. Vice Chair O'Neill noted that the existing post office has a 5-minute parking area on Main Street for customers to drop off mail. Mr. Boyer agreed to present this option to the post office's architect. He suggested this might be a perfect solution for in front of the post office, itself.

Chair Gootee asked how many square feet the retail post office would occupy. Mr. Boyer answered that the post office space would be just under 4,500 square feet. Chair Gootee asked if the commercial parking would drop below grade. Mr. Boyer said the commercial parking would be located one-foot below the level of the post office. The residential parking would be below ground (basement). Mr. Gootee asked if the entire basement floor would be occupied with parking for the residential units. Mr. Boyer answered affirmatively, and noted that there would be 62 residential parking spaces or approximately 1.5 parking spaces for each residential unit.

Mr. Boyer noted that, due to topography, the cornice band above the residential parking entrance was stepped down, and the residential units above have taller ceiling heights. Vice Chair O'Neill asked if the walk-up units in the northwest corner would be residential. Mr. Boyer answered affirmatively.

Board Member Walker asked if the green area above the commercial parking entrance would be a common courtyard area for the residential units. Mr. Boyer noted that the building steps back in this location, and the green area is a decorative trellis. It would not be a common courtyard. He said the intent was to further break up the façade of the building.

Vice Chair O'Neill asked about the depth of the brick wall that extends out to the sidewalk from the garage entrances. Mr. Boyer answered that the depth is 8'2".

Board Member Walker asked if there is a reason to place the commercial parking entrance towards the middle of the structure rather than the end of the building. Mr. Spee said he owns the entire post office site; and eventually, he hopes to build a Phase 2 of the project, which would likely have flow-through commercial parking that is entered from the alley at the very south end. He wanted to introduce a nice flow through the parking area, perhaps making it one way. He also said the entrance to the lower level parking garage was sited mid block so if Phase 2 requires underground parking, the ramp could be shared. He explained that the design works better as proposed and provides a better service area for the post office on the east side of the building. He also noted that a Phase 2 development could include a restaurant use, and it would be natural to have all of the service areas located on the alley side. He summarized that while his current goal is to construct the proposed building, he does not want to be negligent about what might serve a Phase 2 project. They are trying to think to the future.

Board Member Borofka asked if the post office loading dock would extend out from the south wall. Mr. Boyer said the existing post office would continue to function until the new building is finished. At that time, the existing loading dock would be shut down, and another loading dock would be constructed for the new post office. He is designing the new post office's connection to its future loading dock, but the temporary situation will be set up in the interim. Mr. Spee explained that because some post office delivery trucks are tall, providing inside loading space was prohibitive. The post office also indicated they would like their loading space to be outside for safer access.

Board Member Borofka asked if the project site includes the entire property or just the northern portion. Mr. Spee answered that the property is 360 feet wide, but the proposed project is intended to consume just the north 200 feet. With the voluntary setback on Bell Street, the remaining width of the proposed site is 188 feet.

Chair Gootee asked the applicant to describe the finishes he has in mind for the proposed building. Mr. Spee said the building materials would include both brick and stone veneers to provide a more residential feel. The brick and stone would run all the way up to the cornice. The remainder of the façade would be a mixture of high-quality paneling products. Mr. Boyer noted the tonal differences between the pop outs and recesses to emphasize the articulation of the building.

Board Member Borofka asked if the proposed design must comply with the post office's design guidelines. Mr. Spee said the shell of the building was designed by his architect, who worked closely with the post office's architect to design a building that meets their needs. Mr. Boyer said the post office's architect has reviewed the designs to ensure they meet the design requirements for post offices. Mr. Spee suggested that as part of the Phase 2 public hearing, the applicant could present the post office's design plan, as well as a written response about how the proposed design is consistent with the post office's design requirements. Mr. Borofka asked if the post office has specific requirements for lighting. For example, the lights at the current post office are on 24 hours a day for security. He asked if this is an actual requirement. Mr. Boyer said he does not know of any 24-hour lighting requirement. However, the post office retail store will have the same business hours as the current facility, and the post office box portion will be open 24-hours a day. The garage will be closed at night, so the only access would be through the front door. Chair Gootee suggested that the materials submitted for the Phase 2 hearing should include a night rendering showing the lights, etc. He noted that citizens have already expressed concern about lighting.

Board Member Borofka asked if the applicant anticipates the post office will have problems obtaining the necessary permits for signage. Mr. Spee said he anticipates the post office will have standard signing on the front, but he could verify the plans with their architect. In addition, he was hoping to be creative with the sitting wall by casting in the zip code to provide some identity at the grade level.

Board Member Schaefer asked about the height of the existing building located immediately to the north. Mr. Spee pointed out that the power lines that run down the alley are a great story pole to indicate whether or not the proposed building would block views. He noted that the power lines are not even visible from the third floor of City Hall. They are actually four feet below. The building to the north is about 1.5 feet taller than the 34-foot tall building he initially proposed two years ago. Scale wise, the building would be shorter than the buildings to the north and across 2nd Avenue North.

Board Member Borofka asked if the proposed generator would be natural gas or diesel. He asked about the level of noise and exhaust that this equipment would generate. Mr. Spee said the generator would be powered by natural gas, but they have not determined where it would be located yet. He noted that the generator would not provide power for the entire building but to provide safety when the power is out.

Board Member Borofka asked if the applicant is proposing to move the existing sidewalk on Bell Street out to the curb. Mr. Spee said it would be similar to the sidewalk he constructed on the other side of Bell Street unless the City wants a buffer. The existing trees on Bell Street would be removed and replaced with new street trees. Mr. Boyer noted that landscaping would be addressed as part of the Phase 2 public hearing.

Board Member Schaefer commented that the applicant's proposed setback on Bell Street is important to fit in with similar setbacks that already exist on the street. Although the applicant refers to the setback as voluntary, it is necessary to maintain the character of the street. He noted that eliminating the setback on 2nd Avenue is also consistent with more recent development.

Jack Jacobsen, Edmonds, asked how the large post office trucks would access the new site and if post office patrons would drive on through the alley. He also asked how many parking spaces would be required for the project. Mr. Boyer answered that one parking stall is required for each residential unit, regardless of size, if below-grade parking is provided on site. However, the applicant is proposing between 1.5 and 1.75 parking spaces per unit. Mr. Spee noted that a certain percentage of the parking spaces must accommodate full-sized cars.

Bob Groeschell said he owns property that is located directly across the alley from the northeast corner of the subject property and shares many of the concerns reflected in Ms. Usatollo-Smith's letter. He asked if the applicant received any specific design tradeoffs or accommodations by incorporating the post office into the plan. It does not seem to be in the retail zone, which he understands is adjacent to Main Street in a contiguous fashion. Mr. Spee said he was given no waivers of code or any special treatment because the building would include the post office. The designated street front requirement for the BD2 zone goes up 2nd Avenue North from Main Street to just about mid block. That means the project must include commercial/retail space in the same location regardless of whether it is used for a post office or some other retail use. The proposed design accomplishes the goal of keeping the post office in downtown in a smaller space. Mr. Groeschell recalled previous discussions in the City about the concept of offering tradeoffs, such as additional height, in exchange for public amenities. Mr. Spee said that while he would have welcomed this opportunity, the proposed project meets all of the current code requirements.

Mr. Groeschell said he operates a therapy office in a older building located at 3rd Avenue North and Bell Street. When they purchased and remodeled the building three years ago, numerous people stopped by to thank them for not redeveloping the site into condominiums. His concerns about sense of scale are quite profound, and he can't imagine a greater contrast between his building and the proposed project. He noted that the applicant has stated his intentions for a Phase 2 of the project after the post office has relocated into the Phase 1 building. This project could eventually result in a contiguous, full-block building, which does not currently exist in Edmonds. Again, he said the scale of the proposed project is extraordinary given the mix of existing development in the area. He said he appreciates the applicant's efforts to develop contrasts on the surface of the building, but he still gets the image of a container ship. It doesn't matter how many containers are on the deck; if they all go up to a certain height, that is what represents the portrait for everyone who lives or works more than one block east of Sunset Avenue. He said that he has great concern about the lack of variation on height. He suggested that the applicant should incorporate some view and/or light corridors in the overall project.

Mr. Groeschell said he is still unclear about the post office parking. It appears that working parking for the post office is not promised once Phase 2 is initiated. This parking would likely be incorporated into some other project. He said that, from a design standpoint, the community struggles to maintain some sense of scale in the downtown. It is very important to make this a high priority when considering any development. He asked what the actual height of each of the building facades would be. Mr. Boyer answered that the height of the alley building façade would be two to three feet lower than the height of the 2nd Avenue North façade. Again, he emphasized that the proposed project meets all of the height requirements in the current code.

Mr. Groeschell asked the process for future input regarding the application. Mr. Clugston explained that tonight's hearing is the first opportunity for oral public testimony. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Board will continue the hearing to a date in October or November. In addition, the public can submit written comments at any time until the 2nd public hearing is closed. He emphasized that the applicant would provide more detailed information at the second public hearing.

THE PUBLIC PORTION OF THE HEARING WAS CONTINUED TO THE PHASE 2 HEARING.

Board Member Schaefer asked if an analysis was done to identify the proposed project's impacts to current on-street parking. He noted that one curb cut would be eliminated. Vice Chair O'Neill noted that there is no on-street parking on the east side of 2nd Avenue at this time. Mr. Spee said there may be one stall on the east side. He said he will likely request a loading zone in front of the main entrance to the residential units. This zone is critical for tenants but would reduce the number of on-street parking spaces available on Bell Street by two. He reminded the Board that additional customer parking would be provided within the building.

Board Member Borofka noted that the conceptual drawing shows one postal box on 2nd Avenue North. He asked if this drop off box is required. Mr. Spee said this was added to the drawing as a placeholder, and they will discuss the option further with the post office.

The Board reviewed the Design Guidelines Checklist and provided the following direction to the applicant and staff in preparation for Phase 2 of the public hearing process:

A. Site Planning

1. **Reinforce existing site characteristics.** The Board agreed that this standard is **not applicable** to the proposed project. Because the subject property is currently undeveloped, there are no existing site characteristics.
2. **Reinforce existing streetscape characteristics.** The Board agreed that this standard is a **higher priority**. It is important that the setbacks be consistent with other development on both Bell Street and 2nd Avenue North. 2nd Avenue North should have a commercial feel, as opposed to Bell Street, which is more residential.
3. **Entry clearly identifiable from the street.** The Board concurred that this standard is a **higher priority**. The Board felt this was particularly important given the dual use of the building.
4. **Encourage human activity on street.** The Board agreed that this standard is a **higher priority**.
5. **Minimize intrusions into privacy on adjacent sites.** The Board concurred that this standard is a **lower priority**, with a focus on issues such as lighting, trash/recycling area, noise from the generator, etc. It was noted that the adjacent building on the block is the existing post office. There are four cottage houses on 3rd Avenue, two of which are occupied by commercial uses; and no balconies are proposed on the alley façade, which is closest to existing residential development.
6. **Use space between building and sidewalk to provide security, privacy and interaction (residential projects).** The Board agreed that this standard is a **higher priority**.
7. **Maximize open space opportunity on site (residential projects).** The Board agreed that this standard is a **higher priority**. It was noted that the proposed design provides the required 5% open space. The setback on Bell Street would be included in this count, but the open courtyard would not. The courtyard would be for the residential tenants' use only.
8. **Minimize parking and auto impacts on pedestrians and adjoining property.** The Board agreed that this standard is a **higher priority**.
9. **Discourage parking in street front.** It was noted that the intent of this standard to avoid surface parking being located off of the street behind the sidewalk. On-street parking is actually required at this location. The Board agreed that this standard is a **higher priority**.
10. **Orient building to corner and parking away from corner on public street fronts (corner lots).** The Board agreed that this standard is a **higher priority**.

B. Bulk and Scale

1. **Provide sensitive transitions to nearby, less-intensive zones.** The Board reviewed that zoning directly to the south and east of the subject site is BD2, zoning to the north across Bell Street is RM-1.5, and zoning to the west across 2nd Avenue North is RM-1.5 and RM-2.4. The right-of-way (2nd Avenue North and Bell Street) separates the proposed project from the RM-1.5 and RM-2.4 zones. It was discussed that if the subject property were located immediately adjacent to a multi-family zone, transition would be a greater concern. While the public has indicated they would like to see some kind of transition on the eastern side adjacent to the alley, it was noted that the properties to the east are zoned the same as the subject property and could be redeveloped in a similar

fashion. The applicant provided a transition on the north side by stepping the building back and providing open space. A similar approach is proposed on the west side. The Board agreed that this standard is a **lower priority**.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

1. **Complement positive existing character and/or respond to nearby historic structures.** The Board agreed that this standard is **not applicable** to the proposed project. It was discussed that the only historic structure within close proximity of the subject property is the existing post office, and the proposed brick façade would be somewhat reminiscent of the existing post office.
2. **Unified architectural concept.** The Board discussed that this standard does not mean uniformity. The building design needs to be broken up, but still unified. The applicant has done this with a pedestal, cornices, modulation, different levels, etc. This is very important to play down the mass of the building. They agreed that this standard is a **higher priority**.
3. **Use human scale and human activity.** The Board agreed that this standard is a **higher priority**.
4. **Use durable, attractive and well-detailed finish materials.** The Board agreed that this standard is a **higher priority**.
5. **Minimize garage entrances.** The Board agreed that while the entrances to the commercial and residential parking areas must be distinguishable, it is also important to minimize their appearance from the street by using architectural elements. The Board felt the applicant's proposal adequately addresses this standard. They agreed that the standard is a **higher priority**.

D. Pedestrian Environment

1. **Provide convenient, attractive and protected pedestrian entry.** The Board concurred that this standard is a **higher priority**.
2. **Avoid blank walls.** Board Member O'Neill expressed his belief that a blank wall can still be attractive and architecturally significant. However, it was noted that the project would have to meet the design standards that pertain to blank walls. They concurred that this standard is a **lower priority**.
3. **Minimize height of retaining walls.** The Board agreed that this standard is **not applicable**.
4. **Minimize visual and physical intrusion of parking lots on pedestrian areas.** The Board agreed that this standard is **not applicable**, as the applicant is proposing enclosed parking. While safety is important, it will be addressed as part of the development permit process.
5. **Minimize visual impact of parking structures.** The Board agreed that this standard is **not applicable**.
6. **Screen dumpsters, utility and service areas.** The Board agreed that this standard is a **higher priority**.
7. **Consider personal safety.** The Board agreed that considering personal safety is a **higher priority**.

E. Landscaping

1. **Reinforce existing landscape character of neighborhood.** It was noted that there is very little existing landscaping in the area, and the proposal would have to be consistent with the landscape requirements. The Board agreed that this standard is a **higher priority**.
2. **Landscape to enhance the building or site.** The Board agreed that this standard is a **higher priority**.
3. **Landscape to take advantage of special site conditions.** The Board agreed that this standard is **not applicable** to the proposed project.

Mr. Clugston summarized that the applicant would use the input provided by the Board and public to prepare a more detailed proposal for the Phase 2 hearing.

BOARD MEMBER SCHAEFER MOVED THAT THE BOARD CONTINUE THE PUBLIC HEARING ON FILE NUMBER PLN20130046 TO NOVEMBER 6, 2013. BOARD MEMBER BOROFKA SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

CONSOLIDATED PERMIT APPLICATIONS (No Public Participation):

No consolidated permit applications were scheduled on the agenda.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS/ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

Mr. Clugston did not provide an administrative report.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Chair Gootee noted that this is Board Member Walker's last meeting. He thanked him for his contribution to the Board.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 p.m.