



SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

672 Flats/Penrose Group

Site Plan Review Committee Meeting #3

May 18, 2015

Planning Commissioners in Attendance: Nancy Iacomini, Steve Cole, Jane Siegel, Rosemary Ciotti, Chris Forinash, Steve Sockwell, Ginger Brown

MEETING AGENDA

The third meeting of the SPRC on SP #437, 672 Flats, began with a staff presentation covering information requested at previous meetings: site plan standards regarding building siting, landscaped open space standards, and an overview of why alleys are important for urban design. The agenda attempted to cover site design, building form and architecture, and landscaping. The SPRC discussed site design, building form, architecture, and concerns related to design and function of the public alley. It was decided by the SPRC chair that the discussion on landscaping would be postponed to a fourth meeting.

SPRC DISCUSSION

Allocation of uses

- Applicant has eliminated the lay-by in the rear in order to provide additional green space
- Should retail be more targeted rather than provided at corners?
- Concern that there is not enough retail provided
- Exercise room does not activate street
- Would professional office be considered in either the retail space or the flexibly-built building amenity space?
- Retail environment along the west side of Glebe is difficult; building needs flexibility

Building placement and orientation

- Concern that placement of new building will harm existing townhouses. If all were built together, there would be a common market. In this case, the new building, sited so close, will harm property values.
- Concern that if loading is put in alley, there will be trucks backing up at 6 am, generating noise impacts
- Concern that distance between buildings is too narrow

Heights

- Concern about height of building and shadows
- Should there be a step-back in the rear?

Façade treatment

- Concern about light-colored materials and incompatibility with existing brick townhouses
- Alley façade is improved significantly, but the Glebe façade is less attractive
- Concern about the durability of some of the materials—what do cementitious and aluminum panels look like in 10 years?
- Architecture needs work on three sides; carry alley treatment around building

Green Alley

- Should there be screening to protect the privacy of the rear loft units at grade?
- How high are the bioretention planters?
- Overall the alley treatment is quite elegant
- Since the alley treatment was done so well, it doesn't make sense to locate building service/loading uses off alley and disrupt the livable environment created
- Alleys should function as alleys, that is, building services should be located off of the alley
- What is the new alley width? A: average of 33 feet
- Would the alley direction change? A: no
- Would service vehicles be able to access loading if located in alley? A: yes they would.

Wrap up comments

- Density is too high
- There should be more curves in the architecture
- There is a land use issue; this should be a commercial development
- Could permeable pavers be utilized for the alley?
- Alley treatment is successful, but Glebe treatment needs work.
- The Glebe façade needs more articulation
- Concerns about metal materials
- Should the garage access be located from the alley?
- Neighbors strongly oppose service uses accessed from the alley and support their location on 7th Street
- The alley is a “home space” and should be treated as such
- Concern about noise
- The project is improved, but the Glebe façade is not inspiring