

**CITY OF REDMOND
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
November 4th, 2010**

NOTE: These minutes are not a full transcription of the meeting. Tapes are available for public review in the Redmond Planning Department.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: David Scott Meade, Joe Palmquist, Craig Krueger, Lara Sirois

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED ABSENT: Scott Waggoner

STAFF PRESENT: Steve Fischer, Principal Planner

RECORDING SECRETARY: Susan Trapp from Lady of Letters, Inc.

The Design Review Board is appointed by the City Council to make decisions on design issues regarding site planning, building elevations, landscaping, lighting and signage. Decisions are based on the design criteria set forth in the Redmond Development Guide.

CALL TO ORDER

The Design Review Board meeting was called to order by Chairperson David Scott Meade at 7:05 p.m.

MINUTES

MOTION BY MR. PALMQUIST, AND SECONDED BY MS. SIROIS, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 7, 2010 MEETING. MOTION PASSES (4-0).

PROJECT REVIEW

PRE100022, Ardmore Substation

Description: Construction of a new Electrical Substation

Location: 2245 Bel-Red Road

Applicant: Barry Lombard *with* Puget Sound Energy

Staff Contact: Steven Fischer, 425-556-2432 or sfischer@redmond.gov

Mr. Fischer provided two maps as part of the staff report. One is a site plan, one is an aerial view. The broader map shows there is already a substation in Overlake at 152nd and NE 21st, which is the Interlaken Substation. Puget Sound Energy has a need to add more equipment to the substation, but there is no room in the Interlaken location. PSE has been looking for a new home for a substation for the past few years in Bellevue, which has not worked out. PSE talked to the City of Redmond about a year ago about the Bank of America site. This site is large enough to combine both substation sites, so the new substation sites. The transmission lines that run north from Interlaken along 152nd up to NE 24th will eventually be removed, which will be a benefit for the Overlake neighborhood as it grows.

The newly proposed site is an L-shaped property that fronts on NE 24th and Bel-Red road. There is a parcel near the corner of the site which is an automotive parts station. That station will not be moving and is not part of this site. The Ardmore substation will take up the main southern portion of the site. The property itself slopes from east to west, and the applicant will need to add fill to create a level site. There are landscaping and screen wall issues, and PSE has looked to be innovative in solving those issues with, perhaps, an ornamental gate. There are two drives heading into the project site. This is a pre-application meeting, and the applicant is looking for the DRB's input on the work done thus far.

Lynn Thompson from PSE is the civil engineer on the project. She mentioned the grade change on the property, and noted that she is considering the possibility that Bel-Red Road would get widened by 15' in the future. Due to that, she pointed out that the driveway would have to be steep, near 7%, to make the project work. That predicates the need for a retaining wall around the station. The wall is about 15' high now, but it rises to 18.5' tall in one spot to create an ADA-accessible pedestrian path. Other pedestrian amenities, including a bench, have been added as well. An architectural wall around the back has been proposed with treated stone to provide some blank wall relief. A wire mesh fabric is another consideration

in the back of the project, which may be a good idea in terms of the high winds experienced on the project site. For the mechanically stabilized dirt wall, the applicant is exploring a green wall, with soil fabric locked into the MSE wall. It is not clear what kind of vegetation would be used, as maintenance could be an issue.

The applicant noted that she has talked with the City about pedestrian features, art, an educational feature, and security issues. The applicant has proposed adding a solar power feature to this site as an educational piece for the general public. The City has asked PSE to consider bringing in an artist to the project to add to the site as well. PSE held a design workshop to generate ideas for art. The applicant is working to see how this project fits into the Overlake Master Plan, as well. PSE wants to bring a message to the public: "Energy to Do Great Things." The concept is that this site should not be a destination, but PSE still wants to be a good neighbor. Ms. Thompson says the site has many layers, due to the walls which are demanded by the sloping nature of the property. She wants to avoid visual clutter, which she has seen on some Seattle City Light projects.

Colors have not been decided, but the applicant is considering a tile attached to the CMU walls for the fire walls. The metal mesh fabric, for the backside, could be an artistic piece, perhaps with light put through it for visual effect. PSE is trying to get away from chain link and barbed wire fences. However, the fence should still allow wind to get through, and should hopefully be visually appealing. As far as the accent pieces, PSE is considering using LED lights and dichroic glass. The solar panels could be bent into artistic forms, possibly. The idea is to have light interact with materials to project the idea of energy production. PSE is also considering adding a barcode as art to the project, which a person could take a picture of with a smart phone and download more information. The proposed landscaping could block off the architectural wall, and bollards will be added to prevent people from driving into the site. The sidewalk will have some stamped concrete. The PSE says the transmission pole will be tall, and the idea is to make it a landmark. The applicant showed the DRB some examples of interesting vertical designs. She asked the Board for their feedback on use of light and different materials for the vertical element and the walls of the project. Mr. Fischer asked for feedback on artwork and landscaping, as well.

COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD MEMBERS:

Ms. Sirois:

- Asked about the transmission pole, and if wind power could be generated through it in some way. The applicant stated that is a possibility, but says that could present a challenge in design.
- The applicant spoke to a more reactive approach with this vertical element, such that the solar power produced on the project could power some light on this pole, for example. She would like to make this part of an art walk for Overlake Village, in the long run.
- Ms. Sirois mentioned the umbrella found at Pike Place Market, which is based on the wind. She would like the applicant to consider that response to the wind, simply because it would be a very interesting visual element.

Mr. Krueger:

- Echoed Ms. Sirois' desire for a wind element to the transmission pole. The applicant noted that more wind would be available on the west side of the site, which the public would not see. There could be an interactive element to the site to allow people to move solar panels, for example, and see the impact on the power generated.
- Mr. Krueger asked about the pole on 24th, and if that could be used for solar generation. Ms. Thompson says that site is not the best for sun, but could share some elements with the main transmission pole to tie the project together. She added that she did not add the wind element due to price and time considerations.
- Mr. Krueger says the funds for the project should go toward wind generation, in that much of the blank wall area the applicant seems concerned about would not be seen, and would not need that much money spent on it.
- The applicant added that the west side of the site, with its wall, needs to be responsive to the possibility of condominiums looking down on the property in the future.

Mr. Meade:

- Agreed with Mr. Krueger that the wall should be more of a background element in the planning of this project. He would like the applicant to focus on some evergreen to cover the wall and then add some seasonal color to brighten it up.
- Regarding the transmission pole, Mr. Meade urged the applicant to be very creative. Also believes the gates could be extraordinary, without too much of an investment. Ms. Sirois says the gates and tower should be the main focus when it comes to spending on this project.
- Mr. Meade says the pole could be simple, but could have an attachment that would be “eye candy” for the project.
- Mr. Meade added that for wind features, there is an artist on Orcas Island that creates brilliant steel kinetic pieces. Kirkland has such a feature, and Mr. Meade recommended looking into that.
- Mr. Krueger asked if there was a humming sound to the plant, and the applicant says it does make some noise and that it is code compliant.
- Ms. Sirois says the vegetative wall looks very good. The applicant says she would like to have it all around the site, but that would be too much of a challenge for maintenance.
- The applicant asked about lighting on the project. Mr. Krueger would like the applicant to draw attention to the eye candy of the project with lighting.
- Mr. Meade would recommend using some elements from PSE’s industry, such as old manhole covers, to make an interesting gate element. He recommended also adding light around the frontage of the project and perhaps on the transmission pole.

Mr. Palmquist:

- Believes the gate should be one material, with a standard look. He says the transparency of the overall project is what gives it appeal, and says there is no reason to draw attention to the gate. He believes any art in this area would appear to be applied, and not overly useful.
- Mr. Palmquist noted that letting the project be, simply, what it is would be his preference. In his opinion, making a simple gate with lighting, and good landscaping, would make for a good project.
- Mr. Palmquist says creating a pedestrian path on the site, closer to the road, would be appreciated; there is a project with a creek and trail nearby on Bel-Red Road that might serve as a good example.
- Mr. Fischer pointed out this site was part of a large super-block from 24th to 21st. There is a call for a pedestrian path through this area, as part of the Overlake Master Plan. Right now, the trail dead ends into private property, which could be a problem for PSE and the City. The City is hoping to build that trail in the future, but most likely not until property is developed to the south.
- Mr. Palmquist notes there should still be some path options, and art could be added where that path gets closest to the substation.
- The applicant says there is a concern that there is no place for this path to go now; right now, there is evidence that people may be camping on this site. Right now, the applicant is planting non-camping friendly material in that area. Future construction of a trail has been allowed for.
- Mr. Palmquist understood the applicant’s concerns, and wanted to make sure that the vegetation could be easily removed for a trail. He says the layers of interest on the site are well-established without the addition of too much art.

Ms. Sirois:

- Ms. Sirois added that as far as the walls around the project, a wall stamp would not necessarily be needed. The applicant says a simpler idea would be welcome. Ms. Sirois says the application of a stone tile would be a bit contrived, and textured concrete would be acceptable.
- The applicant says budgeting is a concern, which is why she pushed for the inexpensive stone tiles. Ms. Sirois would push for a simpler design, but the applicant says that may turn the wall into a target for graffiti. Mr. Meade says more landscaping could help in that regard.
- Mr. Fischer noted that much of the plant material was deciduous, which could look sparse during the winter months, and would not screen the wall properly. Mr. Meade suggested using more evergreen planting near the wall, perhaps using an evergreen magnolia.
- Mr. Fischer added that the texture of the tile suggested by the applicant looks too busy; however, he’s concerned with a simple design that might look too flat. He suggested a pilaster with a cap.
- Ms. Sirois asked if there might be a wood pattern to use on this wall, which the applicant agreed she could use.

- Mr. Palmquist warned that wood fences proposed around the project could present a challenge; he has seen break-ins and graffiti around some wood fences around his neighborhood. He would suggest metal mesh rather than the concrete wall.
- Mr. Meade prefers the concrete wall, and would rather have some tagging cleaned up than the look of metal mesh. The applicant noted that some of PSE's metal mesh fences have been tagged, as well.
- Mr. Fischer suggested adding some non-tagging friendly landscaping near the base of the wall, but the applicant noted that a 5' shoulder has been added to improve maintenance, which could allow access for taggers. She added that some evergreens could be added that could help in that area.
- Mr. Krueger asked if vines might be added to a concrete wall. The applicant has concerns over using an invasive species; the DRB assured her that a Boston ivy would not be, and would turn color, too.
- The applicant added that Himalayan blackberry is all over the site, which will be a challenge to fight. She is concerned that even native blackberries would be invasive.
- Mr. Krueger would like some attention paid to the gate closest to Bel-Red.
- The applicant says she has a fair budget to work with on art. She noted that she has heard from the DRB tonight that she should focus on the artistic direction of the transmission pole, and make it into a landmark. She is hoping to transition that piece to a visual element along 24th.
- There will be some effort put into improving the gate element, but the applicant will use a simple design that improves transparency. Mr. Meade says the DRB is not asking the applicant to restrain herself. The applicant says she will look toward an elegant gate design, perhaps with a lightning bolt.
- Mr. Fischer asked about the tile on the fire wall. The applicant says that wall would not be seen by too many people other than future neighbors. Mr. Meade suggested doing something with the tile or a cap. He likes glazed CMU material as an option. Ms. Sirois says a more muted look around that wall would be a smart decision. Mr. Meade said a pattern on the fence could mirror what was on the wall.
- The applicant added that the artistic piece on the pole would have a color and design that could guide other elements of the project. Mr. Meade invited the applicant to come back to the Board with a special pole design.
- Mr. Palmquist says too much details on the firewall could distract from the project, a simple cap on that wall might be a good solution in that area. The applicant thanked the DRB members for their time.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION MADE BY MR. PALMQUIST, AND SECONDED BY MR. KRUEGER, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:25 P.M. MOTION PASSES (4-0).

MINUTES APPROVED ON

RECORDING SECRETARY