

4 December 2018

City of Mill Creek Department of Planning and Development
15728 Main Street
Mill Creek, Washington 98012

Subject: Project Narrative and Design Elements Discussion
for Design Review Board Submittal

Project: Cubes Self-Storage
Site Address: 17414 SR-527 (Bothell-Everett Hwy)
Mill Creek, Washington 98012

Parcel Number: 2705 0700 401300
Zoning: BP (Business Park)
Site Area: +/- 156,784 SF (+/- 3.60 acres)

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of, and in collaboration with, Gramor Development Washington, LLC, we respectfully submit the following project narrative of design intent and elements for review and consideration by the Mill Creek Design Review Board.

Project Description and Site Context:

It is proposed that the project will consist of one 3-story structure with a footprint of approximately 34,013 square feet to serve as a fully-enclosed self-storage facility with an integral leasing office. The total proposed enclosed building area is projected to be roughly 89,500 square feet. The proposed use is permitted in this zoning.

Access to the site is proposed from the west side of SR-527 (Bothell-Everett Hwy) with a full-access driveway near the northern property boundary and a right-in-right-out-only driveway near the southern property boundary. **The site plan configuration, on-site parking, right-of-way access and the general building footprint were previously approved by the City as part of the Binding Site Plan and Reasonable Use decision issued in October of 2018 (File No. PL2018-0013).** The general stormwater management approach and structures were, likewise, approved as part of the previously mentioned Binding Site Plan process.

The proposed building will be a type S-1 (Storage, moderate hazard) occupancy and will be of Type II-B construction with fire sprinklers provided throughout. The facility will include an integral leasing office (Type B Occupancy, Accessory Office/Retail) as well as the parking and covered load/unload areas as shown on the attached site and building plans.

The property to the north is zoned BP and currently includes a residential structure with a variety of outbuildings and much of the property cleared to grassy pasture.

The property adjacent to the south is also zoned BP and is currently under development to become an early childhood learning center.

The property adjacent to the west is undeveloped (BP zoning).

The property across SR-527 (and outside of Mill Creek city limits) to the east is a single-family residential development which sits elevated above the road grade and its home fronts are oriented generally to the east, facing away from this project.

Building Design Elements and Objectives Narrative

As the site design, parking and circulation have been previously approved under the Binding Site Plan and Reasonable Use process we have limited our discussion here to building design elements and objectives.

Visual Identity, Design Consistency and Building Entrances

The proposed building implements a cohesive and subdued color and materials palette that is applied consistently around all faces of the building. This design language of consistent elements – including punctuated and glazed building bays, modulated parapet heights, canopies and variations in cladding – is employed around the building in order to establish balance and proportion, generate visual interest and to identify relative functions within the facility.

Thoughtful and intentional landscaping and plantings on all sides, along with a considerable landscape buffer at the front of site, serve to soften the building presence relative to adjacent sites and the right-of-way.

The leasing office is situated within the distinctive tower element of the building mass which, with ample glazing, a distinctive roofline, and a prominent entry canopy, clearly identifies the primary pedestrian and business access point for the facility. Similarly, the “span-over” portion of the building delineates primary vehicular and storage user access to the facility and offers users the valuable amenity of a loading area that is secure and sheltered from the weather.

Pedestrian areas at the leasing office, its associated parking, and areas along the rear of the building include pedestrian-scale lighting that is both decorative and functional. The covered loading bay will be well-lit to ensure a pleasant and safe environment for patrons. Cut-off fixtures will be employed to mitigate off-site light spill.

Canopies are provided along the rear (west) façade to provide weather protection over entrances to exterior access storage units. These canopies provide visual interest, functionality, shadow lines and a design consistency with the leasing office canopy at the front of the structure.

Modulation, Transitions, Ground Level Details & Transparency and Roof Expression and Form

The overall building mass has been designed with a base level of painted masonry block construction which is punctuated by glazing and doors for building access and storage units. This masonry base element steps down at the leasing office tower in order to, along with the distinctive sloping roofline, visually distinguish the tower element.

Clerestory glazing at the sloped roof element lends an airiness to the tower element to ensure that it does not overpower the overall building massing while still providing a prominent and striking architectural form.

The architectural metal cladding at the second and third levels are presented in both vertical and horizontal orientations offering variations in visual texture and are separated by a substantial, complementary color accent band. This progression of materials – masonry base to vertical metal cladding, accent band and then horizontally oriented architectural metal cladding culminating in a bold cornice and coping - provides a cohesive “base, middle and top” hierarchy and distinctive roofline to the building mass. This hierarchy is, in places, interrupted in by the cantilevered bay elements which hold additional transparent glazing. These bay elements penetrate the cornice to introduce both vertical and horizontal modulation in the parapets.

Ground floor glazing covers 35 percent, by surface area, of the ground floor walls facing SR-527 and 41 percent by lineal footage. The ground floor glazing has been placed to align with the upper floor bays and glazing elements to create a design logic and proportionality along this east façade. All of the ground floor glazing, with the exception of accent kick-panels at the leasing office, is fully transparent to establish visual depth and connection through to the building interior. Glazing is additionally provided at the bay elements on the second and third levels at the south, east and north facades. As the building sits approximately 4 to 5 feet lower than the adjacent road level the second-floor glazing, in particular, will have as much visual impact as that present at the ground level.

Equipment Screening

The project will have very limited outdoor mechanical equipment and no major roof top mechanical units. Any outdoor equipment will be screened from view.

Landscaping Objectives

Much of the landscape theme is based upon the history of the site; previously a plant nursery. The proposed plant palette provides a variety of native, native-adapted and ornamental plantings that are known to be suited for the local conditions, are easily maintainable and drought tolerant once established.

In keeping with the context of the site, the proposed landscape shall provide unity of design through repetition of plant materials, vibrancy of colors and numerous shades and textures. Groundcovers will mature and fill in 90% of ground coverage within 3 years.

The significant landscape buffer enhances and softens the edges of the proposed building, while a meandering sidewalk and use of ornamental and interesting plant materials is intended to encourage the feel of a park or garden like setting.

Screening of equipment and separation of the parking lot areas are done with plant materials that are hardy and robust to accommodate foot and vehicle traffic while being mindful maintenance and upkeep.

All plant materials will be watered with an automatic irrigation system. The system will be divided into zones to provide efficient watering and reduce water run-off and water waste.

In total, the well-defined palette of colors and materials, regular building forms and consistent design elements presented in the building combined with considered landscaping culminate in a unified and cohesive project that communicate durability and quality while speaking to respective functions with thoughtful form, balance and proportion.

Thank you for your consideration of this application. We look forward to the opportunity to formally present this project to the Design Review Board and have further discussions. In leading up to the meeting, if any staff should have questions about this application or proposal please do not hesitate to contact me directly via telephone at 425-885-4300 or via email at dirk@magellanarchitects.com.

Sincerely,



Dirk McCulloch – Senior Project Manager
Magellan Architects

CC: *Dave Pruin – Gramor Development, LLC*
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