



November 5, 2020

TO: City of Bellingham Planning and Community Development
FR: Jed Clark, Arbour North Architects
RE: 3619 Byron Ave Parcel: 380331453079 Design Guidance Submittal

Planning and Community Development. Please see comments below describing the proposed project, compliance with COB guidelines for Samish Way Urban Village and Request for Departure.

Development Objectives: New 75 unit apartment building. Five story wood framed construction built atop a single-story concrete parking structure and community area. High density use of land in the Samish Way Urban Village.

Narrative: Project is located in Sehome Neighborhood, Samish Way Urban Village, located between the I-5 Interstate and Samish Way. Building is located adjacent other commercial, retail and apartment use. Adjacent apartments are similar in size and scale. Lower floor will consist of covered parking, entrance lobby, bike storage and other unassigned space for tenant use. Materials at grade are commercial in nature; concrete, masonry, storefront glazing and metal with glass canopies. Materials above grade are residential in nature; horizontal siding, board and batt siding, bolt-on metal balconies, vinyl windows with wood trim. Building is highly articulated, parapets vary in height, material and color. Blank walls are minimal, materials and colors vary.

Request for Design Departure: Applicant would like to omit the step back at the forty-foot level. Proposed design provides significant articulation and complexity along the primary facades. Height varies along Byron between a two level and six level facade. Along 37th Street, building has a repeating pattern of recess and projection that extend to the sixth-floor roof. Clipping this geometry at forty feet will interrupt the perceived height, balance and scale. Omitting the requirement for a set back will increase the density of the property.

Guidance requirements and response...

Bellingham Municipal Code 20.25.070 Urban village.

1. *Site Design.*
 - a. *Orientation to Street...* Building entrance is along Byron, with ample glass and commercial materials.
 - b. *Surface Parking...* Parking is at grade, under building. Parking is concealed behind building façade.
 - c. *Drive-Through Facilities...* N/A
 - d. *Refuse Enclosures...* Dumpster and recycling enclosure is inside the parking area and not visible from street.
 - e. *Rooftop Screening...* Parapets are generally 3-feet or more tall and will screen all mechanical equipment.

- f. *Pedestrian Connectivity...* Building is adjacent to Byron and 37th.
- g. *Variations on Building Design...* Shape, material, texture and color offer significant variety in building design.
- h. *Site Lighting...* Site is almost entirely covered by building. Lighting will be adequate.
- i. *Fencing...* Privacy fencing along the alley is proposed to be brick with pilasters.

Building Design.

a. Massing and Articulation.

- i. *Reduce the apparent mass...* Complexity of shape, material and color provides complexity, thus reducing apparent mass.
- ii. *Guideline. Buildings should convey a visually distinct base and top...* Brick, concrete, storefront at base, residential materials above.
- iii. *Guideline. Roof parapets and eaves are encouraged to vary in height to avoid long, straight lines at the maximum building heights...* Roofs and parapets have significant variation in height, material and color.
- iv. *Guideline. Buildings with facades longer than 50 feet should be divided into "modules" that are expressed three dimensionally throughout the building facade. Modules could vary in width...* Building is modulated.
- v. *Guideline. Reduce the apparent mass of buildings facing adjacent public spaces, historic register sites or residential zones by stepping down building height and reducing the area of wall planes...* N/A

Ground Floor Details.

- i. *Intent. Reinforce the character of the streetscape by encouraging the greatest amount of visual interest along the ground level of buildings facing streets...* Building at grade has visual interest via brick, pilasters, canopies.

Structured Parking.

- i. *Intent. Reduce the visual impacts of structured parking on public streets, public open spaces and residential zones...* Parking is concealed behind building façade. Access is via gate.

Building Material.

- i. *Intent. Create vibrant urban villages through the use of high quality materials...* Materials are commercial in nature at grade, including brick, concrete, storefront and glass and steel canopies.

Transparency.

- i. *Intent. Provide a visual link between the business space and the public sidewalk to create visual interest at the pedestrian level...* Significant storefront glazing along Byron Avenue.

Weather Protection.

i. Intent. Provide pedestrians rain protection, integrate individual buildings into the streetscape, and define the pedestrian zone... Canopies are proposed along Byron. Building overhangs exterior wall along 37th.

Blank Walls.

i. Intent. Provide visual interest and avoid the negative impacts of blank walls... Blank wall minimized.

Public Open Spaces.

i. Intent. Buildings adjacent to public open spaces such as public parks, plazas, and trails shall be oriented to promote activity and interaction, and provide visual interest to and from buildings so as to avoid the back-of-building effect... Condition not applicable.

Projections into the Public Right-of-Way.

i. Intent. Provide adequate separation between private residential spaces, such as balconies, and the public walkway in order to make both the private and public spaces comfortable. Projections should not interfere with street amenities such as street trees, lighting or important public views... Residential is on second floor and above.

Residential Design.

i. Intent. Residential projects should have an active and direct link to the street pedestrian system while maintaining an appropriate transition from public to private space... Residential is on second floor with strong connection to street via lobby on Byron Ave.

END