



## CITY OF KIRKLAND

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### DESIGN RESPONSE CONFERENCE #1 Overall Master Plan Review STAFF ANALYSIS

**File No.:** DRC08-00001

**Project Name:** Kirkland Parkplace Center - Office Plan

**Applicant:** Douglas Howe, Touchstone

**Project Planner:** Teresa Swan, Senior Planner

**Date:** August 4, 2008

**Meeting Date  
and Place:** 7:00pm, Monday August 18, 2008  
City Hall Council Chambers  
123 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Kirkland

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Proposal Redevelopment Plan**

The subject property is the existing Kirkland Parkplace Center (see Attachment 1). Douglas Howe of Touchstone has applied for a Design Response Conference for redevelopment of the northern portion of the center. Mark Arnold, architect with LMN Architects, will present the proposal.

The proposal is to redevelop the site in two phases: Phase 1 would be primarily office with some ancillary retail in the northern portion of the site and Phase 2 would be office and potentially retail in the southern part of the site where the QFC store and some general retail are currently located. The preferred conceptual site plan for Phase 1 would contain 910,000 square feet within 7 buildings and underground parking. Existing buildings within Phase I would be removed. Vehicular access would change from one location to two locations along both Central Way and 6<sup>th</sup> Street. The design review application for Phase 2 would be submitted at a later time (see Attachment 2).

The applicant proposes to redevelop the site under the City's current policies and regulations at a maximum allowable height of 5 stories in height and a front yard setback along Central Way and 6<sup>th</sup> Street of 20 feet.

### **B. Proposed Review Strategy**

Given the number of buildings and key elements that will be proposed to integrate the master plan, the applicant proposes to have the Design Review Board consider the proposal over six meetings with the following proposed review strategy (see Attachment 2):

- Meeting 1: Review of overall master plan
- Meeting 2: Group A building review (westerly two buildings facing Central Way)
- Meeting 3: Follow-up from last meeting and Group B building review (one building at corner of Central Way and 6<sup>th</sup> Street)
- Meeting 4: Follow-up from last meeting and Group C building review (two buildings facing 6<sup>th</sup> Street)
- Meeting 5: Follow-up from last meeting and Group D building review (two interior buildings)
- Meeting 6: Follow-up from last meeting and wrap-up of project

## **II. PREVIOUS CONCEPTUAL DESIGN CONFERENCE**

A Conceptual Design Conference for this project was held on April 21, 2008. At the meeting, the Design Review Board (DRB) provided feedback to the applicant as to how the design guidelines and Comprehensive Plan affect and pertain to the proposed project. The DRB determined which guidelines and policies apply to the project, and asked that additional materials be submitted as the project moves to the Design Response Conference.

At the Conceptual Design Conference, the DRB reviewed 6 alternative site layouts with corresponding total square footages. The DRB gave the direction that they preferred Site Plan B at 910,000 square feet and Site Plan E at 895,000 square feet in seven buildings because the two plans would provide the largest single open space area in the westerly portion of the site next to Peter Kirk Park (see Plan Alternatives in Attachment 2).

## **A. DRB DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the Conceptual Design Conference, the DRB gave the following direction:

### **1. Overall Site Plan**

- Of the six design concepts submitted, the Board favored Plan B at 910,000 square feet and Plan E at 895,000 square feet.
- Since the proposed plan is an office campus rather than public place with retail uses, other elements become very important, such as landscaping, views, size of and activities within the central common area, building height and setbacks, and connection between the park and 4<sup>th</sup> Street across the site.

*Applicant's response: Based on the comments from the DRB, the applicant has submitted a revised preferred alternative concept of Plan B at 910,000 square feet. The submitted site plan begins to respond to the DRB comments at the Conceptual Design Conference (see Attachment 2).*

### **2. Building Design**

- The office campus should provide a diverse urban experience with different building styles and materials tied together by common themes of landscaping, lighting, signage, sidewalks and other elements.
- Buildings along Central Way should be of different designs to break up the visual appearance of the long linear frontage of buildings.
- The Comprehensive Plan talks about "significant" setbacks for the upper floors. How much of a setback is needed to meet the "significant" test needs to be addressed. The perceived visual massing and height from ground level perspective should be used to determine appropriate upper floor setbacks (performance based).

*Applicant's response: The applicant has provide enlarged cross sections showing a proposed setback of 20 feet for the 1st and 2nd stories and a proposed setback of 30 to 40 feet for the 3rd to 5th stories depending on the location of the wall modulation. A portion of the 1st story is below the grade of Central Way and 6<sup>th</sup> Street due to the elevation of the site compared to the elevation of the adjacent streets. For future meetings, the applicant will need to submit more detailed views of the proposed buildings as seen from ground level (see Attachment 2).*

### **3. Open Spaces and Landscaping**

- Superior landscaping and substantial spacing between buildings and along the perimeter are needed to mitigate the scale of the buildings. High quality landscaping will be a key essential to this project.
- A strong open central area is needed to connect to the park.

*Applicant's response:* The general location of landscaping is shown on the preferred concept site plan. More detailed landscape plans for each building will be submitted at future meetings.

The applicant shows a 20-foot setback from Central Way and from 6th Street, but no specific setbacks are noted between the buildings. At the meeting on August 18, 2008, the applicant should provide the approximate proposed setbacks between buildings for the DRB review and consideration. With the review of each group of buildings over the next six or more meetings, the DRB will continue to consider the appropriate distance between each building.

The applicant shows a continuous open space corridor from Peter Kirk Park going east to the buildings along 6th Street. More details on the open space corridor will be provided in the future (see Attachment 2).

#### **4. Gateway**

- Gateway treatment will be a key to a successful entrance way design at 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Central Way.

*Applicant's response:* Under the proposed review strategy, the gateway treatment will be presented at the third Conceptual Design Response Conference meeting as part of review of the proposed building at the corner of Central Way and 6<sup>th</sup> Street (see Attachment 2 – proposed DRB review strategy).

#### **5. Westerly views along Central Way**

- Upper floor setbacks and positioning of buildings can provide some distance views of sky and beyond.

*Applicant's response:* Existing and proposed westerly views along Central Way are shown in the preferred concept sections of Attachment 2. Under the proposed review strategy, views should be considered in more detail at the second and third meetings when the buildings along Central Way are presented.

### **B. REQUESTED INFORMATION**

The DRB requested that the following information be provided during the Design Response Conference review:

- **Cross sections** both east-west and north-south showing perceived visual massing and height as measured from ground view showing for several upper story setbacks and massing options based on Concept Plans B/E.
- **View corridor study** along Central Way showing different options for upper story setbacks and massing based on Concept Plans B/E.
- **Gateway design** options and elements within the gateway.

- **Vignettes of space between each of the buildings** both from a north-south and east-west perspective. One idea would be to use the Sketch-Up program.
- **How the proposal meets the City's regulations, Plan and design guidelines.**

*Applicant's response: Two cross sections have been provided along Central Way and one cross section has been provided along 6th Street. More detailed cross sections need to be provided at future meetings along with the remaining items listed above (see Attachment 2).*

### **III. DESIGN RESPONSE CONFERENCE - STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

The DRB should conduct a Design Response Conference over the next several meetings and determine if the project is consistent with the design regulations in the Zoning Code Chapter 92, the *Design Guidelines for Pedestrian Oriented Business Districts* and the Downtown Plan of the Comprehensive Plan. See Sections VIII through X below for information regarding the zoning regulations, and Comprehensive Plan policies and guidelines that apply to the subject property.

In addition, the application is subject to the applicable requirements contained in the Kirkland Municipal Code, Zoning Code, Fire and Building Code, and Public Works Standards. Comments from the City's Development Review Committee will be provided at the next meeting. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance with the various provisions contained in these ordinances.

### **IV. SITE INFORMATION**

#### **A. Existing Conditions**

The property is located in Central Business District (CBD) 5 and is identified in the Downtown Plan as being located in Design District 5 (see Attachments 3 and 4).

The Kirkland Park Place Center is located at 211-530 Park Place Center in the northern half of CBD-5 (see Attachment 1). At 11.7 acres, the site is the largest single ownership property in Downtown Kirkland. It currently is developed with 7 building pads, consisting of the QFC store, the two restaurants (Pancake House and the prior Thai Restaurant), a row of ground floor retail uses across from QFC, a row of retail uses with office above facing the fountain plaza, a parking structure with office above located between the two retail areas, a 5-6 story office tower plus a penthouse and a roof top appurtenance, a theatre beneath the office tower facing west, a two story TGIF restaurant/24 Hour Fitness Club building and a separate building containing Key Bank/Purple Cafe Restaurant/Ravenna Gardens store. The Bungee building that adjoins the Pancake House and prior Thai Restaurant is not on the subject property. Surface parking is provided throughout the site (see Attachment 2).

Prior to development of the Park Place Center in the early 1980's, the site sloped gradually from Central Way and from 6th Street to Kirkland Ave and Peter Kirk Park. With development of the center, substantial amount of dirt was removed on the northern portion of the site to create a level site resulting in the parking lots and building foundations being well below the grades of Central Way and 6th Street.

A signal controls the 6th Street entrance access. A stop sign controls the access at Central Way and at Kirkland Ave. The driveway leading to Kirkland Ave is an easement road granted to the center from the owner of the property now containing the Bungee office building.

Pedestrian access is available in the following locations (see Attachments 1 and 2):

- Sidewalks are available to and from Central Way, 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Peter Kirk Park.
- Along the southwest property line just north of the Pancake House building, a set of stairs connects the site to the Emerald Building.
- Along the southeast property line, a set of stairs connects the site to the Continental Plaza Building and a set of stairs connects the site to an apartment complex. There is no set of stairs to the Emerald Building along the south property line. However, it is evident that pedestrians walk northeast from the Emerald Building across the bedding area on the Continental Building property as a short cut to the east and central areas of the Kirkland Parkplace Center and to the Post Office rather than use the stairs to the west. Also, the Circulation Diagram in Attachment 2 does not entirely reflect the correct location of existing pedestrian paths south of the site.

### **B. Private Amendment Request**

April 23, 2007, Douglas Howe, the new owner, applied for a private amendment request to amend the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code to allow additional height up to 8 stories, reduced yard setbacks and other changes to the existing regulations and Comprehensive Plan policies (File ZON07-00016). The Planning Commission is currently studying the amendment request and will provide a recommendation to the City Council. The City Council will make the final decision on the amendments sometime in early fall 2008.

On May 15, 2007, the DRB held a Conceptual Design Conference (File CDC07-00003) on Douglas Howe's proposal to redevelop the entire site reflecting the general building height and setbacks that he requested in the private amendment request application. A Design Response Conference on the proposal can only occur if and when the City's zoning regulations and Comprehensive Plan policies are changed to reflect the additional height and reduced yard setbacks that Mr. Howe proposed in the Conceptual Design Conference.

### **C. Short Plat Application**

Touchstone has applied for a short plat application to divide the property into two lots to match the two development phases (City File SPL08-00011). The reason for the short plat is twofold: divide the property into two lots for financing purposes and vest for allowed uses under the current regulations. As allowed under the City's current regulations for the CBD-5 zone, the office plan proposal may or may not contain any retail uses. An outcome of the current private amendment request process could be to require retail on the ground floor.

#### **D. Prior Design Review Approval**

In 2000, Michael Shulman, the prior owner of the Parkplace Center, applied for design review for three new buildings to be located adjacent to Central Way and 6<sup>th</sup> Street. The proposal included two – 5 story office buildings with ground floor retail totaling 264,976 square feet and a 2 story retail building at 26,143 square feet. The TGIF/24 Hour Fitness building would be removed. Most of the new parking would have been placed underground. On August 24, 2000, the Park Place Center project received final design review approval with the condition that the DRB would review and approve the final building materials and treatment, the signage concept and the plaza features prior to issuance of the first building permit (DRB-99-127). On August 23, 2001, the first building permit was submitted (BLD01-01130). However, the building permit was never issued so the permit and design review approval expired.

#### **V. SURROUNDING CONDITIONS AND ZONING**

The following summary reflects the zoning designation, allowable height, existing uses and height of existing buildings adjacent to the subject property (see Attachment 1):

North: CBD 6 zone. Maximum building height is 4 stories above average building elevation. The existing Terra Apartments with retail on the ground floor are 4-5 stories, depending on the location. Also to the north is a 1-story Italian restaurant.

CBD 7 zone. Maximum building height is 3 stories above average building elevation. The area facing the Parkplace Center contains a 1 story bank and a 1 story seafood restaurant.

East: Planned Area 5C zone. Maximum height is 6 stories or 60 feet with at least 1 acre or 30 feet above average building elevation. The area contains the 4 story File Net office building and the 1 story U.S. Post Office further to the east.

Planned Area 5B zone. Maximum height 30 feet above average building elevation. The area contains several 1-2 story office buildings. The City is currently considering two private amendment requests for additional building height – one in PLA 5B and one in PLA 5D.

South: CBD-5 zone. Same zone as the Parkplace Center. Maximum building height is 3-5 stories. The area contains the 1-story Bungee building, the Emerald and Continental Plaza office buildings and a residential development all at 4-5 stories.

West: Park Use zone. Maximum height is on a case by case basis. The area contains Peter Kirk Park, developed with tennis courts, a skate park and playground, the Teen Center and Senior Center, a basketball court and a baseball stadium.

Additional descriptions of the site and vicinity, photographs, and site constraints, prepared by the applicant, are contained in Attachment 2.

## **VI. PUBLIC COMMENT**

As of August 1, 2008, no public comment on this proposal has been received. Any comments received between the issuance date of this staff report and the public meeting on August 18, 2008 will be provided at the meeting.

## **VII. STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (SEPA)**

SEPA is the state law that requires an evaluation of a development proposal for environmental impacts. The issue most frequently addressed through SEPA is traffic. Design Review is not a project action and thus SEPA review is not required at the time of Design Review. SEPA review will occur prior to issuance of any building permit for the project.

## **VIII. CBD-5 ZONING REGULATIONS AND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICIES**

Zoning standards for the subject property are found in the CBD-5 use zone charts (see Attachment 3). Downtown Plan policies for the site are found in the Design District 5 discussion in the Comprehensive Plan (see Attachments 4 and 5). Policies for pedestrian connections, gateways, views, visual landmarks, and circulation are illustrated in Figures C-4 and C-6 (see Attachments 6 and 7).

It should be noted that Kirkland Parkplace was approved and constructed in the early 1980's. The City adopted its Downtown Plan in the late 1980's and the zoning regulations in the early 1990's. When written, the regulations and the Plan did not take into consideration existing conditions (i.e., elevation of the site to the adjacent streets and future allowable height to the north and east). The site is currently legal non-conforming for lot coverage, orientation to the park and potentially parking.

The following summary of key regulations and policies are important to point out as they form the basis of any redevelopment of the site. To facilitate the design analysis, the regulations and policies have been presented below in 4 groupings: applicable to the entire zone, applicable to Central Way, applicable to 6th Street and applicable to Peter Kirk Park.

### **A. Regulations and Policies Applicable to the Entire CBD-5 Zone** (noted if a regulation or a policy)

- Entire zone: physically integrated both in site and building design (regulation).
- Maximum height: 3 to 5 stories (both regulation and policy). Maximum height for office is 13 feet and for retail is 13 to 15 feet (regulation).
- Building massing: Generally lower towards the perimeter and stepping up towards the center of the district and reduce building massing above 3rd floor (policy).
- Placement, size and orientation: preserve openness within the district and on the perimeter of the district (policy).

*Comments: Concerning how the regulations and policies have been actually implemented, the buildings along Kirkland Way in CBD 5 all have been constructed under the existing regulations and policies. The buildings reach 5 stories in height in the northern portions of the site, are not in the center of the district and are not physically integrated both in site and building design. The 2000 design review approval for the earlier redevelopment plan for Kirkland Parkplace approved 5-story buildings next to Central Way and 6th Street and not in the center of the district.*

*Concerning height, the applicant proposes a maximum building height of 5 stories at 67 feet (13' x 4 floors and 15' x 1 floor). Unless the applicant is proposing retail oriented space on the ground floor, the maximum allowable height is 65 feet.*

**B. Regulations and Policies Applicable along Central Way** (noted if a regulation or a policy)

- Height: 3-5 stories above average building elevation (regulation and policy).
- Massing: Building over 3 stories generally reduce building mass above 3<sup>rd</sup> floor and facades facing street limited to 2-3 stories with taller portions stepped back significantly (policy).
- Setbacks: 20' front yard setback, but can be reduced to 0' with continuous retail at street level or DRB can reduce if criteria met (regulation).
- Gateway: positive image and enhance entryway at northeast corner of site. Include signage and distinctive landscaping and/or structure (policy).

*Comments: For upper floor setbacks, the CBD-5 zoning regulations are silent along Central Way, but are very specific along Kirkland Way. Along Kirkland Way, the setback requirements are 20 feet for 2 stories, 40 feet for 4 stories and 50 feet for 5 stories. Staff believes that specific upper floor setback regulations were adopted for the area along Kirkland Way because it was undeveloped at the time of adoption of the CBD-5 zoning regulations and the area faces a residential zone to the south with a maximum height of 30 feet. Kirkland Parkplace was already developed under a master site plan when the regulations were adopted so one would conclude that the City did not attempt to adopt prescriptive upper floor setbacks for the existing development.*

*Given the 5-story Terra Apartments to the north and the 4-story File Net building to the east with upper floors built close to Central Way and 6th Street, one would conclude that the upper floors in the Kirkland Parkplace Center next to Central Way can be closer than the upper floors prescribed along Kirkland Way.*

**C. Regulations and Policies applicable along 6<sup>th</sup> Street** (noted if a regulation or a policy)

- Same as Central Way, except no mention of facades facing street limited to 2-3 stories with taller portions stepped back significantly (policy).

*Comment: The comment above under Section B. for Central Way also applies along 6<sup>th</sup> Street as well.*

**D. Regulations and Policies applicable next to Peter Kirk Park** (noted if a regulation or a policy)

- Height: 3-5 stories above average building elevation (regulation and policy).
- Massing: Building over 3 stories generally reduce building mass above 3<sup>rd</sup> floor and facades facing street limited to 2-3 stories with taller portions stepped back significantly (policy).
- Setbacks: 10' setback from park, but DRB can reduce if criteria met (regulation).
- Orientation to Park: buildings well modulated and not turn back on park (policy).

- Landscaping: Effective transition between site and the park (policy).

#### **E. Other CBD 5 zoning regulations**

- Permitted uses: office, retail, restaurant, entertainment and other general uses with retail not required on the ground floor.
- Other setback: 0' along south property line next to buildings that face Kirkland Way.
- Parking: retail/office - 1 stall for every 350 square feet of gross floor area and restaurant – 1 stall for every 125 square feet of gross floor area.
- Lot coverage: 80% (existing development does not meet this standard).
- Sidewalks: 10' along Central Way (pedestrian oriented street) and 8 feet along 6th Street (major pedestrian sidewalk). Pedestrian-oriented streets require public spaces in front of building, connection to buildings from sidewalk and pedestrian friendly building forms.
- Existing trees: Under a Tree Plan II required in Chapter 95, an arborist report must be submitted to determine the viability of the London Plane trees along Central Way and 6<sup>th</sup> Street as part of the decision as to whether to retain the trees.

#### **F. Other Downtown Plan Policies applicable to CBD 5**

- Vehicular access: preserve north-south access between Central Way and Kirkland Way and enhanced with pedestrian improvements.
- Pedestrian access: provide links as shown in Figures C-4 and C-6 of the Downtown Plan and effective east-west transition from the park and across the site to Planned Area 5 to the east at 4th Ave (see Attachments 6 and 7).
- Views: Important downtown views from the eastern gateway. Can see hills north and south of the core and sweeping views of the lake and mountains.

*Comment: The policy on views across the site was written in the late 1990's. Since then the existing trees going west on NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street and then on Central Way have grown and now block views to and across the site. In addition, buildings have been constructed between the site and the lake and mountains that block views.*

### **IX. PEDESTRIAN ORIENTED DESIGN GUIDELINES**

The following information summarizes some of the key guidelines contained in the *Design Guidelines for Pedestrian-Oriented Business Districts*:

#### *Special Considerations for Downtown Kirkland*

- *Most of the business core of Kirkland is already developed with fairly narrow sidewalks. New development should provide sidewalks at the recommended width. Providing wider sidewalks throughout downtown is a long-term endeavor.*
- *A strong street tree planting scheme is especially important in downtown because of the variety of scale and architecture encouraged in private development. Major entries into*

*Kirkland, especially along Central Way, Kirkland Avenue, Lake Street, and Market Street, should be unified by a strong street tree program.*

- *Pedestrian features should be differentiated from vehicular features; thus fenestration detailing, cornices, friezes, and smaller art concepts should be concentrated in Design Districts 1 and 2, while landscaping and larger architectural features should be concentrated in Design Districts 3, 5, 7, and 8.*
- *Large-scale developments, particularly east of the core area, should stress continuity in streetscape on the lower two floors. Setback facades and varied forms should be used above the second stories.*
- *Special attention should be paid to both the design and detailing of new buildings on corner sites in the pedestrian oriented design districts. Existing buildings could incorporate some of these elements (human-scale and visual punctuation) through the use of such elements as awnings and well-designed signs at the corner.*
- *The Downtown Plan's mandate for high-quality development should also be reflected in sign design.*

In addition, the following is a list of key design issues and/or design techniques that should be addressed with this project as identified in the design guidelines.

- Building corners in the CBD
- Pedestrian-oriented space and plazas
- Blank wall treatment
- Vertical and horizontal definition
- Architectural scale
- Horizontal modulation
- Change in roofline
- Human scale
- Building material, color, and detail

*See adopted Design Guidelines for Pedestrian-Oriented Business Districts for complete text and explanations.*

## **X. DESIGN REGULATIONS**

Attachment 9 is an outline of the design regulations found in Chapter 92 of the Zoning Code. Below is a list of some of the key design regulation topics that need to be addressed at future meetings for each building:

- Architectural and human scale
- Pedestrian and vehicular access
- Open space and landscaping
- Building materials, color and detail

Memo to Design Review Board

Design Response Conference # 1 for Kirkland Parkplace Office Plan

August 4, 2008

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## **XI. ATTACHMENTS**

1. Vicinity Map
2. Applicant's Submittal
3. Zoning Code, CBD 5 Use Zone Chart
4. Comprehensive Plan, Design District Map. Figure C-5
5. Comprehensive Plan, Downtown Plan CBD 5 Excerpts
6. Comprehensive Plan, Figure C-4 Downtown Master Plan (pedestrian connections, gateways, visual landmarks, views)
7. Comprehensive Plan, Figure C-6 Design Districts 5–Circulation and Gateways
8. Summary of Design Guidelines for Pedestrian-Oriented Business Districts applicable to Design District 5
9. Outline of Chapter 92, Design Regulations