



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE QUEEN ANNE/ MAGNOLIA DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3006977

Address: 509 First Avenue West

Applicant: Chris Davidson

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, February 15, 2012

Board Members Present: Mindy Black  
Jacob Connell  
Bo Zhang

Board Members Absent: David Delfs  
Jill Kurfirst

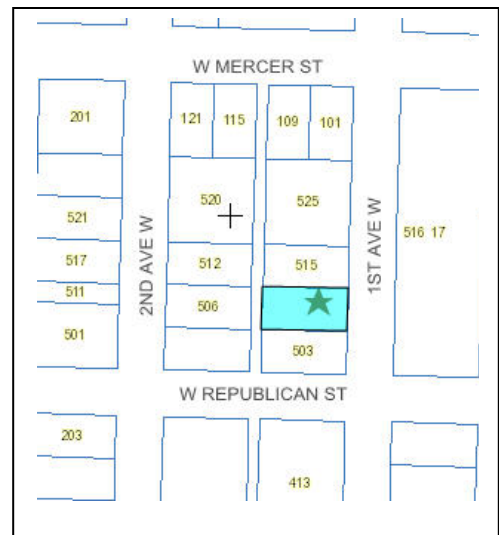
DPD Staff Present: Bruce P. Rips

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial Three with a 40' height limit (NC3 40) within the Uptown Urban Village.

Nearby Zones: North: NC3 40  
South: NC3 with a 65' height limit south of W. Republican St.  
East: NC3 with a pedestrian zone and 65' height limit along the Queen Anne Ave. corridor.  
West: NC3 40. Multifamily Midrise (MR) along 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. W.

Lot Area: 7,200 sq. ft.



Current Development: A single family residence occupies the parcel. The site front 1<sup>st</sup> Ave W. between W. Mercer St. on the north and W. Republican St. on the south. The site descends approximately four feet from the northeast to the southwest corner.

Access: Alley access

Surrounding Development & Neighborhood Character: A variety of building types and styles populate the immediate neighborhood. Newer buildings reflect zoning conditions that promote mixed uses with commercial spaces at the street front and residential dwelling units above (e.g. the Safeway building across the street). Other building types include older apartment buildings such as the one immediately to the south of the site and office structures (south of W. Republican and north of W. Mercer St). Some one story commercial structures with mostly restaurant and retail are located nearby. Seattle Center lies two blocks to the east. Kinneer Park is at the western edge of the Uptown neighborhood.

ECAs: No mapped environmentally critical areas on the site.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicant proposes a four story mixed use structure with three live/work units at street level, 40 residential units at-grade and on the three upper floors, and parking for 21 vehicles to be provided below grade.

## **DESIGN PRESENTATION**

The applicant provided three massing and organizational options for the infill site. All share an alley entrance to the garage, live/work units fronting onto First Ave. W. with residential units behind and above. Schemes #1 and #3 have rectangular shaped lightwells between the units in the middle of the floor plans and the two adjacent buildings. Scheme #1, an “I” shaped design attempts to limit the number of units facing the south airshaft to three per floor or a total of 12 units total. Scheme #3 forms a double loaded corridor extending along the east/west spine to produce six units per floor or a total of 36 units overlooking the two airshafts. In mass, these two schemes somewhat resemble one another.

In Scheme #2, the architect carves out the south west corner forming an “L” shaped floor plate. The units behind those that face First Ave look into the courtyard, representing a majority of the apartments. This design provides for the penetration of light into many of the units and produces a blank wall at the north property line facing the adjacent building.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Eleven members of the public affixed their names to the Early Design Review meeting sign-in sheet. Speakers raised the following comments:

- Trash receptacles accumulate in the alley. Provide a place near the alley for the dumpsters.
- Provide an adequate amount of parking for each unit.
- Modulate the front of the building. The proposed façade is too massive.
- Shadows formed by the building to the south will be cast in to the light well.
- The “I” shaped scheme is appreciated as it defers to the adjacent buildings. It is unrealistic to expect much solar access, however.
- It is preferable to maintain greenery (including the large Holly tree) than to create solar access.
- The proposed building will block some of the north windows of the south building.
- Consider safety issues in the alley. Accidents occur there.

## **PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS**

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance. The Board identified the Citywide Design Guidelines & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

The Neighborhood specific guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

### **A. Site Planning**

**A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics. The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.**

**Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Throughout Uptown new developments should, to the extent possible, be sited to further contribute to the neighborhood’s pedestrian character.**

**Uptown Urban and Heart of Uptown character areas encourage outdoor dining areas utilizing sidewalks and areas adjacent to sidewalks. Outdoor dining is especially encouraged for sites on block faces with southern exposure.**

**A-2 Streetscape Compatibility.** The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.

**Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:**

Throughout Uptown developments that respond outward to the public realm are preferred.

- Site outdoor spaces in accordance with the location and scale of adjacent streets, buildings, and uses.
- Locate plazas intended for public use at or near grade to promote both a physical and visual connection to the street.
- Define outdoor spaces through a combination of building and landscaping, and discourage oversized spaces that lack containment.

Throughout Uptown site identity features such as art, signage or major public open space at gateway locations as identified on the map. Seek opportunities for welcoming signage that is specific to the Uptown Urban Center at gateway locations. Architecture should also reinforce gateway locations.

Within the Uptown Park character area, streetscape improvements should include where feasible a consistent park-like landscaped strip in the planting strip, as consistent with the historic pattern in the area.

In the Uptown Urban and Heart of Uptown character areas, encourage streetscapes that respond to unique conditions created by Seattle Center.

In the Heart of Uptown character area new development should provide when possible: a widened sidewalk through additional building setback at street level; or retail façade design with panels, sliding doors or other features that allow generous openings to the street.

In the Uptown Park character area, when retail and offices are located within the neighborhood, they should be designed to acknowledge and blend with the predominantly residential environment.

**A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street.** Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

**Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:**

Throughout Uptown, major entrances to developments should be prominent. The use of distinctive designs with historical references is strongly encouraged. Design,

detailing, materials and landscaping may all be employed to this end. Building addresses and names (if applicable) should be located at entrances, tastefully crafted.

See Board guidance given for D-12.

- A-4 Human Activity. New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.**

**Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:**

**A top priority within the Heart of Uptown character area is to promote active, customer-oriented retail storefronts at street level.**

**Major retail spaces are encouraged on streets designated Large Scale Commercial Corridor as shown on the map.**

**Throughout Uptown encourage outdoor dining.**

Employing the maximum amount of glazing at the commercial storefronts should encourage pedestrian activity.

- A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites. Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.**

The elevations facing the two adjacent structures should convey a sensitivity to tenant privacy. Useful techniques include shifting or off-setting the floor levels and ensuring that windows do not align with one another. At the Recommendation meeting, the applicant will need to present an elevation overlay of the adjacent conditions to illustrate how maximum resident privacy has been ensured.

- A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street. For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.**

**Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Front Setbacks**

**Where feasible, new development in the Uptown Park character area should consider landscaping any setback from the sidewalk. Landscaping within a setback should provide a transition from public to private space and define a boundary between these.**

**Where the incorporation of decorative gates and fencing may be necessary to delineate between public and private spaces, these features should be softened**

**by landscaping where feasible.**

The location of two large planters shown pushed against the live/work units would interrupt pedestrian traffic on the sidewalk and impede the display of the commercial portion of the units.

**A-7 Residential Open Space. Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.**

The proposed light wells will receive little solar exposure. Lighter colored materials cladding the elevations would assist in reflecting light into the open spaces benefiting the prospective tenants and those who live in the adjacent buildings.

**A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access. Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties, and pedestrian safety.**

**Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Throughout Uptown the preferred location for surface parking lots is in the rear of the building or away from or otherwise screened from the street and sidewalk.**

**Preferred Alley Access**

**Access to new development is preferred via alleyways, if feasible. Throughout Uptown encourage all parking for residential uses to be located below grade.**

The project team has placed the parking garage entrance off the alley. This met with the Board's approval.

**B. Height, Bulk and Scale**

**B-1 Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility. Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to near-by, less intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk, and scale between anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.**

**Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Throughout Uptown, a departure would be supported for 3' of additional height for projects that step back the top floor of the structure a minimum of 6' from the street.**

In the Heart of Uptown character area, break facades into smaller massing units.

In the Uptown Urban character area larger massing units and less modulation are appropriate, provided they are carefully designed, with quality materials.

In order to prevent monolithic walls on or close to the property line, the building mass should be reduced at these critical areas.

## **C. Architectural Elements and Materials**

**C-1 Architectural Context.** New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.

**Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:**

In the Uptown Park character area, extensive landscaping, the use of brick and inlaid tile as building materials and designs with an appearance of substance and quality are recommended to promote Uptown Park's desired character.

The Uptown Park character area emphasizes the notion of historic continuity—the relationship of built structures over time.

The Uptown Park and Heart of Uptown character districts prefer an architecture that emphasizes human scale and quality, detailing and materials, and that remains compatible with the existing community.

**Supplemental Guidance Scope**

The Uptown Urban character area embraces high quality urban infill, and responds to special relationships with nearby civic institutions.

**C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency.** Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.

**Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:**

Throughout Uptown buildings and landscaping should strive to create projects with an overall neat and cohesive appearance.

This will be an important Board consideration as design development occurs.

- C-3 Human Scale.** The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements, and details to achieve a good human scale.

**Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Throughout Uptown human-scaled architecture is strongly preferred. Proportion should be provided by such components as the detail of windows, doorways, and entries. Appropriate scale and proportion may also be influenced by the selection of building materials.**

**Architectural designs that create an impression of reduced size consistent with a pedestrian-oriented environment should be encouraged, especially in the Uptown Park and Heart of Uptown character areas.**

**Throughout Uptown size signs, exterior light fixtures, canopies and awnings to the scale of the building and the pedestrian. Signs that add creativity and individual expression to the design of storefronts are encouraged.**

Although most of the storefront will have glazing, it is detailing of the fenestration that will, in part, convey an intimate scale. The designs for the doors, window hardware, canopies and other elements should illustrate that the architect placed considerable thought into achieving the aspirations of the guideline.

- C-4 Exterior Finish Materials.** Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

**Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Within the Uptown Park and Heart of Uptown character areas, the use of historic-looking brick and tile facades are strongly encouraged to create a more consistent, unified, and historic appearance throughout the district.**

**Throughout Uptown, decorative exterior treatments using brick, tile, and/or other interesting exterior finish materials are strongly preferred. Quality exterior finish materials should be incorporated at all levels and on all exterior walls.**

Use lighter materials to clad the elevations of the two light wells in order to reflect light into the units that will have minimal solar exposure due to the building's massing.



## D. Pedestrian Environment

- D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances.** Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.

**Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:**

Throughout Uptown entries should be designed to be pedestrian friendly (via position, scale, architectural detailing, and materials) and should be clearly discernible to the pedestrian.

Throughout Uptown special attention to the pedestrian experience and street right-of-way should be given along pedestrian corridors as identified on the map (pg. VI).

Throughout Uptown the use of a pedestrian-scaled streetlamp within all character areas is encouraged. In addition, streetscape features such as street clocks and benches are encouraged in Heart of Uptown and Uptown Urban character areas.

In the Uptown Urban and Heart of Uptown character areas, encourage Seattle Center campus redevelopment along its boundaries to either open vistas from Uptown into Seattle Center or to provide activation for the street.

Including amenities for transit riders in a building's design rather than the traditional use of curbside bus shelters generates a safer and more active street. In the Uptown Urban and Heart of Uptown character areas the elimination of curbside bus shelters is encouraged in retail areas as appropriate.

- D-2 Blank Walls.** Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.

**Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:**

Within the Uptown Park character area landscaping (e.g., trellised climbing plants and other urban greenery) is the preferred treatment for walls.

**In the Uptown Urban and Heart of Uptown character areas artwork and decorative surfacing may provide an alternative wall treatment to landscaping in some locations.**

The Board encouraged the applicant to open up the north stair case where it faces into the light well. By keeping the staircase partially unenclosed, it reduces the amount of blank wall and mass.

- D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures. The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape. Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.**

**Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Throughout Uptown designs that lessen the visibility of parking structures are preferred. Garages and parking structures should, where feasible, incorporate landscaping to reduce their visual impact.**

**Parking structures are discouraged in the Uptown Urban and Heart of Uptown character areas.**

For the most part, the only visible portion of the garage structure would face the alley.

- D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas. Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.**

See guidance for D-8. Provide a screened area near the alley for trash and recycling storage.

- D-8 Treatment of Alleys. The design of alley entrances should enhance the pedestrian street front.**

**Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Throughout Uptown ensure alleys are designed to be clean, maintained spaces. Recessed areas for recyclables and disposables should be provided.**

**In Heart of Uptown and Uptown Urban character areas encourage alleys to be activated with subordinate retail spaces at the mouth of the alley. Encourage retail to “turn the corner” at alley entrances.**

The small strip of plantings along the alley met with the Board’s approval.

The Board members reiterated the importance of providing a screened recessed area for trash and recycling off the alley. The utility area and the screened holding area for trash pick-ups may, in turn, reduce the amount of vegetation along the alley.

**D-9 Commercial Signage. Signs should add interest to the street front environment and should be appropriate for the scale and character desired in the area.**

**Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Throughout Uptown tasteful signs designed for pedestrians (as opposed to passing vehicles) are preferred. Backlit signs, animated reader boards and similar signs are discouraged. Blade signs, wall-mounted signs, signs below awnings, and similar signs are preferred.**

The applicant will need to provide an example of the signage concept for the Recommendation meeting.

**D-10 Commercial Lighting. Appropriate levels of lighting should be provided in order to promote visual interest and a sense of security for people in commercial districts during evening hours. Lighting may be provided by incorporation into the building façade, the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, in landscaped areas, and/or on signage.**

**Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Uptown accommodates shopping and eating experiences during the dark hours of the Northwest’s late fall, winter, and early spring. Pedestrian area lighting is an important feature of each block in the Uptown Urban character area, and the Heart of Uptown character area.**

This guidance will be important aspect of the review at the Recommendation meeting.

**D-11 Commercial Transparency. Commercial storefronts should be transparent, allowing for a direct visual connection between pedestrians on the sidewalk and the activities occurring on the interior of a building. Blank walls should be avoided.**

The Board liked the extensive amount of glazing along the street frontage. Storefront glazing should be at full height with the maximum amount of fenestration. At the Recommendation meeting, the detailing of the storefronts should be well evident.

Due to the depth of the units, the canopies should have glass in order to bring light into the live/work units otherwise the back portion of the units will be dark. The canopy heights and depths should vary from one another to create a sense of scale and variety.

- D-12 Residential Entries and Transitions. For residential projects in commercial zones, the space between the residential entry and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and a visually interesting street front for pedestrians. Residential buildings should enhance the character of the streetscape with small gardens, stoops and other elements that work to create a transition between the public sidewalk and private entry.**

The Board strongly recommended that the upper façade should mark or signal the placement of the primary residential entry on First Ave. This will differentiate the residential entry from the live/work spaces by providing definition to the entire street facing façade and by signifying the residential entry at the larger urban scale.

## **E. Landscaping**

- E-1 Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites. Where possible, and where there is not another overriding concern, landscaping should reinforce the character of neighboring properties and abutting streetscape.**

**Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Within the Uptown Park character area, streetscape improvements should include a consistent landscaped planting strip between the sidewalk and the street as consistent with the historic pattern in the area.**

**Throughout Uptown, streetscape landscaping as per guidelines A-2 and D-1 is encouraged.**

- E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site. Landscaping, including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture, and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.**

**Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Throughout Uptown, but especially within the Uptown Park character area, landscaping should be substantial and include a variety of textures and colors, to the**

**extent possible. Landscaping should be used to enhance each site, including buildings, setbacks, entrances, open space areas, and to screen parking and other less visually attractive areas. Encourage planted containers at building entries.**

#### **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based upon the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure(s). The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the applicant did not request a departure.

#### **BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the EDG meeting, the Board recommended the project should move forwards to MUP Application in response to the guidance provided at this meeting.

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