



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning & Development

D. M. Sugimura, Director

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE SOUTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Meeting Date: January 10, 2008
Report Date: January 23, 2008
2nd Meeting Date: February 28, 2008
2nd Report Date: March 4, 2008

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number: 3008044

Address: 5020 California Avenue SW

Applicant: Eric Murphy of Hewitt Architects

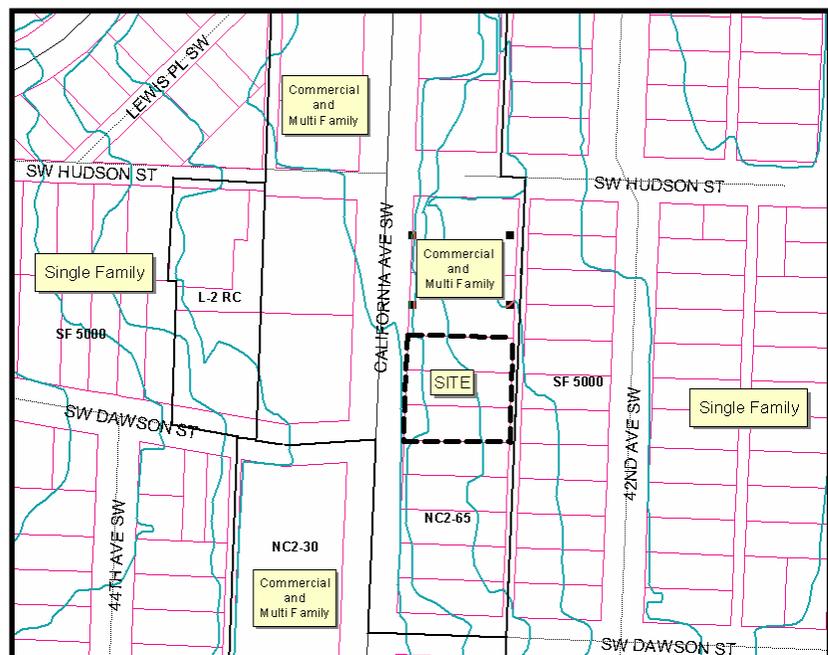
Board members present: Deb Barker (Chair)
Catherine Benotto
Christie Coxley
David Foster
Jeff McCord

DPD staff present: Mike Reid, Land Use Planner
Colin Vasquez, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

The 22,125 square-foot site consists of three parcels and is located along the California Avenue SW neighborhood commercial corridor, immediately west of a single-family residential zone. The site currently contains three structures functioning most recently for multi-family, single family, and small-scale commercial uses. The site shares street frontage to the west with California Avenue SW and utilizes an existing and fully-improved alley to the east for vehicular access.

The site exhibits a grade change from east to west of approximately 24 feet, trending lower towards California Avenue SW from the



adjacent single-family zone residences to the east. There are no environmentally critical areas (ECAs) located on the site. An identified ECA steep slope exists north of the site; however, the subject properties are located further south than any potential buffer for this area.

The site is zoned Neighborhood Commercial 2 with a 65-foot height limit (NC2-65) and a floor area ratio (FAR) of 4.75 for structures that contain both residential and nonresidential uses. Similar zoning exists along the east and west sides of California Avenue SW between SW Edmunds Street to the north and SW Dawson Street to the south. An existing alley located approximately 150 feet east of California Avenue SW delineates a zoning transition from NC2-65 to Single Family 5,000 (SF5000). Areas along the east and west sides of California Avenue SW south of SW Dawson Street are zoned primarily NC2-30. Surrounding land uses include a mix of multi-family and single-family residential structures, with commercial uses located along both side of California Avenue SW.

The multi-family residential buildings in the vicinity of the site vary in terms of construction age, although most properties in the immediately vicinity were constructed between the 1960's and 1990's. Most of the single family homes to the east appear to be of early to mid-20th century construction.

California Avenue SW is fully improved with curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and landscape strips along both sides of the pavement. Limited on-street parking is available along both sides of this street, between SW Hudson Street and SW Dawson Street. Vegetation on the site consists primarily of grass and shrubs, with a few mature trees located on the northern-most parcel.

Bus stops are located on California Avenue SW, with a northbound stop immediately south of the site at Dawson Street SW and a southbound stop west of the site at SW Hudson Street.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed development includes the demolition of existing on-site structures and the construction of a mixed-use building featuring street-level commercial space along California Avenue SW with approximately 90-100 apartment units above. The proposal would utilize an existing alley immediately east of the site for vehicular access to an at-grade parking structure within the building.

DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES:

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING (JANUARY 10, 2008)

At the Early Design Guidance meeting held on January 10, 2008 and after visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance and identified by letter and number those siting and design guidelines found in the City of Seattle's "*Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings*" and "*West Seattle Junction Urban Village*" Design Guidelines of highest priority to this project:

- A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics
- A-2 Streetscape compatibility
- A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites
- A-10 Corner Lots
- B-1 Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility
- C-3 Human Scale
- C-5 Structured Parking Entrances
- D-2 Blank Walls

- D-5 Visual Impact of Parking Structures
- D-8 Personal Safety and Security
- E-2 Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites

The primary guidance from EDG included:

- Massing should transition towards California Avenue SW and away from the alley
- Investigate creative ways of utilizing provided open space to minimize impacts to the properties to the east and north
- Provide three refined designs which feature techniques and implementations to minimize the impacts to the less intensive single family zone to the east
- Maximize existing views from the less intensive zone as much as possible and investigate opportunities to minimize shadow effects on properties to the north and east.
- Building should be sited to effectively maximize the special characteristics of the alley and California Avenue SW.
- Design should pay careful attention to quality and detail so that the project can serve as a context setter for future development along this corridor
- Design should avoid potential blank walls, particularly those which may pose aesthetic impacts from the perspective of the single-family zone
- Vehicular access to the site should be visually concealed as much as possible

DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES:

2nd EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING (FEBRUARY 28, 2008)

On February 28, 2008, the West Seattle Design Review Board convened for a second Early Guidance Meeting to review the applicant's response to previously offered guidance. Revised packet materials and display boards were presented for consideration and included perspective renderings, revised design departure requests, site plans, sections, courtyard details, materials and colors, and landscape plans. Additionally, the applicant presented a preliminary materials and colors board for the proposed façade treatments.

DESIGN PRESENTATION

Three design alternatives developed to address the previously offered Board guidance were presented at the 2nd Early Design Guidance (EDG) meeting. All options included a mixed-use structure with street-level commercial space, apartment units on the upper floors, and at-grade parking contained within a parking garage accessible from the existing alley to the east.

The **first alternative** (C2 as presented) provides a mixed-use structure with commercial space facing California Avenue SW to the west and at-grade parking accessible from the alley to the east of the site. The parking structure is capped and creates a level platform with the street-facing commercial uses along California Avenue SW. Approximately 87 apartment units are proposed above the commercial and parking level platform, yielding a "U" shaped building with the open end facing south. This south-facing open space takes advantage of sun exposure and features a landscaped courtyard accessible to residents of the proposed building. This alternative features open space/landscaped buffers along the north, south, and east property lines and additional building modulation along these façades to increase the setback from the corresponding property lines. Contemplated materials and colors were briefly mentioned during the presentation of this design option and include painted concrete, metal and vinyl windows, tone on tone facades, lighter colors along the alley, and brick-red accents for proposed trim. The applicant provided a preliminary landscape plan featuring a combination of deciduous courtyard trees (Maples, Dogwood, Magnolias, Japanese Snowbells, and

Autumn Brilliance Amelanchiers), evergreen shrubs, deciduous shrubs, perennials and grasses, and assorted groundcovers. The landscaping applications will be featured most prominently at the courtyard level, but also open space/landscaped buffers along the north, south, and east property lines.

The **second alternative** (D as presented) also provides a mixed-use building with street-level commercial space along California Avenue SW and at-grade parking accessible from the alley to the east of the site. The parking structure is also capped and creates a level platform with the street-facing commercial uses along California Avenue SW. Approximately 85 apartment units are proposed above the commercial and parking level platform, providing an open courtyard on the platform at the northeast corner of the site. The units range from studios to two-bedroom units, with an overall average unit size of 680 square feet. Contemplated materials and colors mentioned during the presentation of this design option and also include painted concrete, metal and vinyl windows, tone on tone facades, lighter colors along the alley, and brick-red accents for proposed trim. The preliminary landscape plan and green factor analysis, as detailed in the description for the first alternative, also applies to this alternative. This design features open space/landscaped buffers along the north, south, and east property lines.

The **third alternative** (E as presented) proposes similar street-level commercial use and at-grade parking as detailed in the descriptions of the first two alternatives. The parking structure is again capped and creates a level platform with the street-facing commercial uses along California Avenue SW. Approximately 88 apartment units are proposed above the commercial and parking level platform, yielding a “U” shaped building with the open end facing east. This east facing open space takes advantage of sun exposure while minimizing light and air impacts on the single-family residents to the east. Contemplated materials and colors mentioned during the presentation of this design option and also include painted concrete, metal and vinyl windows, tone on tone facades, lighter colors along the alley, and brick-red accents for proposed trim. The preliminary landscape plan and green factor analysis, as detailed in the description for the first alternative, also applies to this alternative. This design features open space/landscaped buffers along the north, south, and east property lines.

The applicant stated that these three alternatives were developed to advance the design guidelines identified by the applicant as highest priority and to respond to the guidance offered by the Board during the previous EDG meeting.

Multiple, recessed entries along California Avenue SW are proposed with each of the three alternatives and are intended to enhance the streetscape compatibility (A-1) between the proposal and established context surrounding the site. The applicant noted that setbacks proposed from the western property line, display windows, and plantings along the sidewalk are intended to enhance the transition from the street to the building.

The alternatives feature a two-story base, five-story middle, and one-story top floor design which the applicant stated complies with the City’s intent for height, bulk, and scale compatibility (B-1). Setbacks along the northern property are above and beyond the requirements of the Land Use Code, while additional setbacks and building modulation along the alley-facing façade intend to minimize height, bulk, and scale impacts to adjacent properties. Alternative D also utilizes an expansive courtyard at the northeast corner of the site to enhance the light and air available to adjacent sites. Articulation, treatments, and signage are intended to be compatible with traditional development in the West Seattle Junction area and strive to advance the human scale (C-3) of the proposal. Impacts resulting from on-site parking (D-5) will not be visible from the street, as vehicular access to the site will be achieved by accessing an alley present to the east of the site. The parking entrance will be further

screened with landscaping to minimize the aesthetic impact to the adjacent single-family residents. The applicant added that the three alternatives, as provided, will not require any identified design departures.

BOARD QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

The Board had the following questions and clarifying comments, with responses noted from the applicant:

- Each alternative features an alley elevation which includes “ghost” garages. Can you explain these garages and their location?
 - The garages are located on the single-family side of the alley and are simply added to provide additional detail to the perspective from the east.
- Which alternative is your preferred?
 - The applicant has developed three responsive alternatives and would like to hear the Board and public feedback before selecting a preferred alternative.
- Can you briefly explain the differences in the California Avenue SW façades?
 - The alternatives all feature the same California Avenue SW façade; however, this façade is different than that which was presented during the first EDG meeting.
 - Alternatives D and E feature different treatments and address the southwest corner of the building differently in each alternative.
- Does the California Avenue SW façade feature openings above the commercial level?
 - The residential units directly above the street-level commercial uses along California Avenue SW will feature sliding doors for outdoor access. Overhead weather protection will run the length of the façade, and a deck will be located above the canopy.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 25 members of the public attended the Early Design Guidance meeting. The following comments were offered:

- The alternatives presented during this second EDG meeting do not sufficiently address the guidance offered during the first meeting.
- Applicant should consider stepping the mass of the proposed structure away from the northwest property edge.
- The applicant was asked to clarify the south setback from the property line (10-15'), although a portion of the parking garage in Alternative C2 is along the southern property line.
- The applicant was asked to clarify the proposed loading zone.
 - The development team is working with SDOT to establish a zone immediately in front of the building along California Avenue SW. Another option would be to locate the loading/unloading activities inside the parking garage.
- The applicant was asked to identify where trash and recycling receptacles would be located.
 - Waste generated on-site would be collected in receptacles located in the parking garage or located along the alley in a recessed enclosure. The applicant will work with the proper waste management consultants to make sure that the receptacles are both shielded from public view and accessible for pick-up.
- The design features small rental units which are not consistent with the sought direction of West Seattle.
- Alternative D2 is the most acceptable of the three designs presented; however, the applicant should investigate locating the courtyard at the southwest corner of the property.

- The units located near the southeast corner of the building will feature extensive glazing, increasing the building's transparency and reducing the building aesthetic impact on adjacent properties.
- The exterior wall of the parking level will also feature greening and landscaping which will help minimize the aesthetic impact on adjacent properties.
- Traffic calming devices are necessary to help control the speed at which residents will enter and exit the proposed parking garage.
 - The applicant is working to develop appropriate traffic calming devices to help control the vehicular activity resulting in the alley.
- The development team has been responsive to the concerns of the single-family residents to the east. Alternative D seems the most appropriate and any additional setbacks would be well-received.
- The applicant should look into reducing the size of the courtyard and reducing the height of the structure.
- Can the applicant explain whether a developed traffic study will analyze 1 or 2 trips per day
 - The traffic consultant and DPD's Senior Transportation Planner will analyze 2 trips per day – AM and PM peak hour trips.
- Brick would be a nice addition along the alley façade.
- The design should address how parking will be provided to service workers and others visiting the building.
- The applicant should investigate options for limiting access to the alley, and should pursue approvals for gaining an ingress/egress point along California Avenue SW.
- The proposal should orient the elevator shaft so that it is not in-line with the south-facing windows of the Broxton.

DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES AND BOARD DELIBERATION

After considering the analysis of the site, the context provided by the proponents, and the general response to guidance previously offered at the initial EDG meeting, the Design Review Board members provided the following comments related to the design guidelines found in the City of Seattle's *Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings* and *West Seattle Junction Design Guidelines* of highest priority to this project.

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.**

Guidance at Initial EDG Meeting:

The Board felt that the proposed massings, displayed in the three alternatives presented during the initial EDG meeting, do not offer a satisfactory response to the site characteristics pertaining to the transition east of the site. Development on this site should, where possible, preserve the views and light currently available to the properties to the east (and the Broxton to the north).

In response to public comments, the Board wants the applicant to utilize the steep grade change to help minimize the impacts that the development may have on the single-family residences to the east. The Board requested that the applicant prepare north/south and

east/west (from the middle of the site) section elevations to show how the proposal will work with adjacent surrounding properties and with the existing site conditions. These sections shall also extend through to the adjacent properties, to illustrate potential impacts posed by this development.

Response to Initial EDG:

The Board felt satisfied with the applicant's response to the previously offered guidance.

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

Guidance at Initial EDG Meeting:

The Board stressed the importance of siting the building effectively to maximize the special characteristics of the alley and California Avenue SW rights-of-way. Compatibility with the streetscape established in the vicinity provides that the proposal should carry the mass and height along the California Avenue SW façade and should step back from the alley right-of-way to the east.

Response to Initial EDG:

The Board felt satisfied with the applicant's response to the previously offered guidance. The Board members debated the treatment of the southwest building corner, and consensus as to which alternative featured the best design could not be reached. The Board felt that the applicant's recommendation packet will include sufficient detail and an explanation for the selected treatment for the southwest corner of the building.

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.

Guidance at Initial EDG Meeting:

The Board felt that the proposed design should respond to the concerns of adjacent residents, particularly the single-family residents to the east of the site and the residents of the Broxton to the north.

The site is located on a zone edge as shown in the map provided on page one of this report. Special consideration should be given to the design of the east façade of the building in order to meet these guidelines. Items to consider include reducing structure height on upper levels, setting back upper levels to reduce scale, shadowing, window locations, landscaping, location of open space, materials, and architectural treatments.

The proposed development should create an acceptable transition between the project site and the existing residences to the east. The applicant must provide sufficient detail on how the proposed development will work with the existing zoning constraints of this site. The Board requests that the applicant prepare section elevations, as detailed in the guidance for A-1, to identify how the proposal will work with the existing site conditions and adjacent properties. The applicant shall also refine the provided shadow study to clarify potential impacts posed by this development. The applicant should develop and graphically document the design relationship with adjacent properties.

Response to Initial EDG:

The Board felt satisfied with the applicant's response to the previously offered guidance. The revised design alternatives (D and E) offer substantial respect for the single-family zone and the Broxton to the north.

It was noted that the NC2-65 zoning designation for the subject property was established in 1995, approximately 8 years prior to the construction of the Broxton. The developer and residents were aware of established development rights for the subject property prior to the construction of the Broxton in 2003. Accordingly, this project is an example of how applications must be treated fairly with the existing codes and the established zoning.

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.

Guidance at Initial EDG Meeting:

As detailed in the *West Seattle Junction Design Guidelines*, current zoning along California Avenue SW has created abrupt edges between intensive mixed-use development and less-intensive residential development. In addition, the Code-complying building envelope of NC2-65 often results in development that exceeds the scale of the existing vicinity. Refined transitions in height, bulk, and scale must be considered within this guideline.

The Board noted that special consideration should be given to the east façade and massing to improve the transition from the NC2-65 zone to the less intensive SF 5000 zone to the east, by examining other items discussed in the Hot Button Issues and Items A-1, A-2, and A-5.

Response to Initial EDG:

The Board felt satisfied with the applicant's response to the previously offered guidance and voiced an interest in seeing the additional design detail along the alley façade which will be presented at the recommendation meeting.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

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

Guidance at Initial EDG Meeting:

The applicant shall provide additional details regarding this item at the next stage of review. The design should pay strict attention to quality and detail to serve as a context setter for future projects along this corridor.

Response to Initial EDG:

The Board felt satisfied with the applicant's response to the previously offered guidance and commented that the detail provided in the packet was at the level of a recommendation

packet. The Board thanked the development team for the detail and attentiveness in responding to the previously offered guidance.

D. Pedestrian Environment

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

Guidance at Initial EDG Meeting:

The applicant should guide the design to avoid potential blank walls, with particular focus on minimizing the aesthetic impacts from the perspective of the single-family zone. Guidance provided under A-1, A-2, and A-5 should be implemented to ensure the façades are adequately treated.

Response to Initial EDG:

The Board felt satisfied with the applicant's response to the previously offered guidance, and was particularly pleased with the applicant's response to obscuring the parking entrance from views along the alley.

- 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.**

Guidance at Initial EDG Meeting:

The Board strongly agreed that the vehicular access to the site should be visually minimized. Comments reflect those found in A-1, A-2, A-5, and D-2.

Response to Initial EDG:

The Board felt satisfied with the applicant's response to the previously offered guidance.

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

Guidance at Initial EDG Meeting:

The Board strongly agreed that the east-facing façade should be treated with consideration for the single-family zoning transition. Comments reflect those found in A-1, A-2, A-5, and D-2.

Response to Initial EDG:

The Board felt satisfied with the applicant's response to the previously offered guidance.

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 neighborhood properties and abutting streetscape.**

Guidance at Initial EDG Meeting:

The Board stressed that the proposal should include the creative utilization of green space and landscaping to soften the transitions towards the single-family zone and towards the Brompton

to the north. The Board also urged that the courtyard design should respond to the great neighborhood amenity of the sensitive views from the properties to the east and should be oriented to provide a break in the massing along the alley.

Response to Initial EDG:

The Board felt satisfied with the applicant's response to the previously offered guidance.

DEPARTURES

No departures have been requested by the applicant at this time. A complete zoning analysis will be completed once the design is advanced adequately to identify all potential development proposals. The proposed development shall adhere to the NC2-65 development standards.

NEXT STEPS

MUP Application:

1. Submit application for Master Use Permit (MUP) application. Appointments for MUP intake may be made by calling (206) 684-8850. Please contact Land Use Planner Mike Reid at (206) 386-4646 or mike.reid@seattle.gov when you have scheduled your MUP intake appointment.
2. Please include a written response to the guidance provided in this EDG, as noted in CAM 238, Attachment B.
 - a. Plan on embedding four 11x17 colored and shadowed elevations, landscape and right-of-way improvement plans into the front of the MUP plan set (4 per sheet).
 - b. Label all sheets for design review and provide a table of contents at the front of the plan set.
 - c. CAM 238 may be accessed at <http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/dclu/Publications/cam/cam238.pdf>.
3. A traffic study or memo disclosing trip estimates should be required as part of the next phase of the MUP process. The applicant should consult with John Shaw (DPD's Senior Transportation Planner) to identify traffic/parking impacts related to the proposal and to develop mitigation strategies as needed. The applicant shall also advance an investigation of traffic calming techniques which should be implemented to help alleviate traffic conditions in the alley.
4. Provide the following graphics, either in the MUP plan set or directly to Land Use Planner Mike Reid, following MUP intake:
 - a. Developed site plan of preferred scheme with surrounding block context showing other proposed structures
 - b. Plans of all significant floor levels including below grade parking. Include scale and north arrow.
 - c. Sections of the project (east-west and north-south), including adjacent structures (existing and proposed) and labeling of building heights at changes in the façade.
 - d. Graphics of the five facades (including rooftop), rendered to provide a sense of the depth of proposed façade treatments, colors, and materials (include proposed treatment for expression of loft levels)
 - e. Detailed sketches of the street level facades, including canopies, entrances, materials, colors, etc.
 - f. Detailed sketches of any proposed alley treatments
 - g. Detailed graphics of the building top and roof level (mechanical equipment location and screening, amenity space, sculptural elements, etc) and courtyard level.
 - h. Perspective sketches of the streetscape experience from the pedestrian's point of view
 - i. Graphics demonstrating the proposed façade treatment at the street level for the alley

- j. Landscape plans, including plant species, size, and placement
5. The applicant can meet with the Land Use Planner prior to MUP intake to discuss the developing design in reference to the guidance from EDG.

Recommendation Meeting:

Include the following items in your design recommendation meeting submittal packet:

1. Graphic details of the building base, rooftop, courtyard space, façade articulation
2. Perspective sketches or perspective graphics including:
 - a. Adjacent development
 - b. Projects currently in the permitting process (if applicable)
 - c. Existing conditions
 - d. Proposed development in the larger scale skyline and continued renderings of the building in the larger West Seattle context.
 - e. Proposed development from the pedestrian point of view along California Avenue SW and along the alley.
 - f. Perspective sketches from the single-family zone, showing views of the developed courtyard, rooftop, and alley-facing façade
 - g. Detailed sketches of significant streetscape elements (residential entries, retail entries, gathering areas, alley development, etc) – including indication of fenestration, façade treatment, landscaping, canopies, lighting, signage, etc.
3. Written response to the Early Design Guidance
4. Developed site plan of preferred scheme
5. Landscape plans for all streetscapes, including plant sizes/species/placement, paving materials, etc.
6. Landscape plans for courtyard and perimeter open areas– include plants, paving techniques, seating, lighting, etc.
7. Plans of all significant floor levels, including the parking level showing the location of trash and recycling receptacles.
8. Sections of the project (east-west and north-south), including adjacent structures (existing and proposed) and labeling of building heights at changes in the façade. Include the alley and California Avenue SW elevations in the east-west sections.
9. Elevations of the facades, rendered to provide a sense of the depth of proposed façade treatments, colors, and materials (including particular attention to the alley)
10. More detailed elevations demonstrating the streetscape elevation and the first 20-30' of building height
11. Graphics indicating further development of the California Avenue SW façade, internal resident circulation (particularly with regard to accessing courtyard open spaces), and vehicular circulation.
12. Detailed graphics of the building top and roof level (mechanical equipment location and screening, amenity space, sculptural elements, etc)
13. Materials and colors board
14. Refined shadow diagrams, including adjacent properties
15. Graphics demonstrating night illumination of the building (light coming from inside and light sources on the outer facades) and lighting fixture information
16. Any 3-dimensional studies and/or models will help the Board in their review
17. Diagrams clearly describing the proposed departure(s) in contrast to the code requirement (if applicable).