



# City of Seattle

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Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor  
**Department of Planning & Development**  
D. M. Sugimura, Director

**DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES  
OF  
THE WEST SEATTLE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
Meeting Date: May 14, 2009**

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Project Number: 3008453

Address: 7125 Fauntleroy Way SW  
Applicant: R. Kevin McFeeley, The Kenney

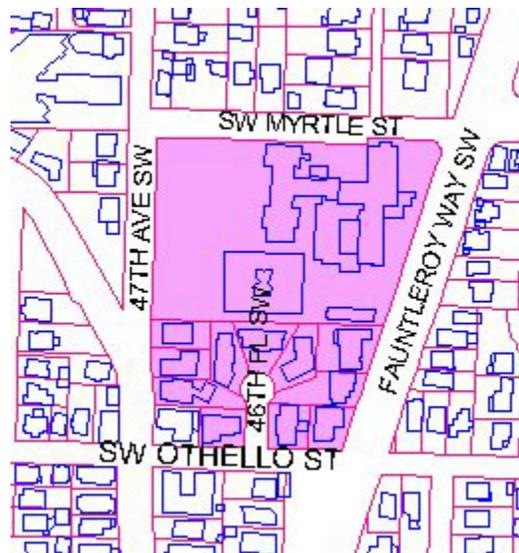
Board members present: Christie Coxley (chair)  
Joseph Hurley  
Robin Murphy  
Vlad Oustamovich (for Brandon Nicholson)  
Norma Tompkins

Land Use Planner present: Michael Dorcy

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**VICINITY AND AREA DEVELOPMENT:**

The site comprises the entire block bounded by Fauntleroy Way SW on the east, SW Myrtle Street on the north, 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW on the west and SW Othello Street on the south. The generally trapezoidal site measures approximately 536 feet in the north/south direction and varies in the east/west direction, from approximately 498 feet at the north to 330 feet at the south end of the site. A keyhole-shaped 46<sup>th</sup> Place SW penetrates the site at its midpoint along SW Othello Street for approximately 134 feet. The total development site is approximately 205, 739 square feet in extent. The northern portion of the site is zoned Lowrise (L-3) while the southern 222 feet is zoned LDT. There are eight existing residential structures within the LDT-zoned portion of the site, containing 23 residential units proposed for demolition in order to accommodate the envisioned development.



The general neighborhood and vicinity, located just a short distance from Puget Sound, is characterized by low scale development. Areas to the east, west and north are largely zoned single family (SF5000), with a small area of Lowrise-1 just the south of the site and pockets of Lowrise-1 and Lowrise-3 to the northwest. Gatewood Elementary School, a City of Seattle Landmark structure, lies across Fauntleroy Way SW, northeast of the site. Lincoln Park, a hilly and wooded parkland of some fifty acres overlooking Puget Sound lies one block south of the development site. South of the park is the Fauntleroy Ferry Terminal which serves Vashon Island.

The proposed development contemplates both the City's vacating the 46<sup>th</sup> Place SW right-of-way and a contract rezone (as yet unspecified) to accommodate the following programmatic objectives: 194 "independent living" apartments, 110 "assisted living" apartments (of which 46 currently exist), 15 "memory care" units, 20 "skilled nursing" units. Underground parking would be provided for 176 vehicles.

In addition to razing the smaller residential structures within the portion of the site currently zoned LDT, the development proposal, as presented at the first two Early Design Guidance meetings, contemplated demolition of several structures that comprise The Kenney, including the "Seaview" building which has been on the site for a century. A notable shift in thinking occurred in the presentation at the May 14, 2009 meeting when the architect presented a scheme for retaining and moving the Seaview building.

At the first Early Design Guidance meeting, held on Thursday, October 23, 2008, at the Library of the Madison Middle School, the Board members present recommended that, given the complexity of the site and the proposal, the applicants should return for a second Early Design Guidance meeting. The Board noted that at the second meeting they would further specify siting guidance and design guidance for the proposed structures and landscaping, as well as identify by letter and number those guidelines found in the City of Seattle's Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily a& Commercial Building of highest priority for the project.

The second Design Review Early Design Guidance meeting was held at 8:00 PM in the Social Hall of the West Seattle Christian Church. At that time, Gene Guskowski from the Milwaukee-based AG Architecture firm, examined five conceptual proposals for the site. The first two were prepared in response to requests from the first Design Review Early Design Guidance meeting: one that was described as allowable within existing zoning for the site, and one that would save the century-old Seaview building in situ

The so-called "code-compliant" option was briefly presented but was said to allow 25 percent fewer new units than the Kenney's basic program requirement that would keep The Kenney financially viable. A second option was described as one that would save the Seaview building. In presenting that option, however, it was noted that the century-old building's "construction type" was not conducive to a remodeling program that would transform its units into the larger, more comfortable retirement apartments that retiring baby boomers, the intended audience, would be expecting. Other difficulties lay in the facts that the existing corridors would result in inefficient floor plans and that existing floor heights would not line up with new ones elsewhere in the complex. Most importantly, a contemplated large, central underground parking garage

would not be possible with the building still there. The proposal that would keep the Seaview building, however, would enable The Kenney to get the ultimate number of units it desired by converting the Seaview to something with four units per floor and increasing the height/density elsewhere on the site. The presentation then moved to the three other options. Notably, Option A would include a “re-creation of the Seaview building” on the northeastern corner of the site. At that time, one of the members of the Board, skeptical of a proposed “re-creation” of the Seaview building at the northeast corner of the site, asked whether the architects or developers had looked into the possibility of moving the historical structure to a new location.

The presentation at the May 14, 2009 meeting, held at the West Seattle Senior Center, centered about a new plan to keep the orientation of the Seaview building but move it some 180 feet toward Fauntleroy Way SW while raising it some 10 feet in height above its current siting. This would enable the area underneath the Seaview building as currently sited to be available for underground parking. The scheme would also enable the design team to address other concerns that had been addressed at the two earlier meetings, in particular the following:

- Visually and actually opening up the site and addressing perceptions that that campus was too walled-off;
- Providing some visual erosion at the corners and edges of the site;
- Relocate service functions from SW Othello Street to SW Myrtle Street

#### Public Comment

Following the architect’s presentation and some clarifying questions from the Board members, comments were solicited from members of the public in attendance. Among those addressed to design issues were the following:

- the project was still too tall and bulky given the context of the single-family and low density surroundings; the program is too large for the site;
- special attention should be given to the elevator penthouses and rooftop mechanical equipment which would add excessively to the overwhelming height and bulk that was being presented;
- the overall bulk should be decreased and the northwest corner opened up to provide continuity with the way the site is experienced today;
- as presented, the build-out along 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW still was a formidable wall, sealing off the campus from the west; not enough setback along these facades;
- the proposed size of the intended units should be revisited and the question asked whether units smaller than those announced might be acceptable in this particular place and market;
- would not a series of smaller courtyards throughout the campus provide richer opportunities for social interaction among residents?
- there were several comments directed at the central area of the development built out to six stories with the benefit of the intended rezone. One person remarked that this central portion of the new Kinney had a “neo-Soviet look;” another member of the public remarked that it “looked Pentagon-y.” Kinds of pastries were the more common analogies, with the area likened to a “doughnut.” This large central “doughnut” would create a dark, black hole without any real light, one person remarked; maybe the same

square-footage might be achieved with the doughnut turned inside out into a cruciform cruller, more in keeping with the intent to open up the campus;

- look into providing a series of garden rooftops, for the residents, and neighbors to view.

### Board Deliberations

One Board member thanked the design team for its job of responding to the Board and public regarding issues raised at the earlier Early Design guidance meetings and suggested that the intention to move the Seaview building bode well for making this an overall successful project. Another Board member remarked that there was the “start of something really good here.” That said, there were concerns regarding both the re-siting of the Seaview and the development on other areas of the site.

Regarding the notion of the Seaview building, once moved, becoming the principal entry to the campus, the Board generally agreed that the idea needed substantial reconsideration. The existing principal entry off Fautleroy Way SW provided a more central and desirable location and had become a “branded entry location for the campus. It should remain as the front door; a primary dual entry system did not appear advisable. Apart from campus design considerations the corner location of the Seaview building had added problems for circulation and traffic safety reasons. Additionally, the Board noted that the orientation of the Seaview building was to the west and that the landscaped courtyard adjacent the west façade was an integral part of the experience of the building. As presented by the development team that essential integration had been lost or at least significantly compromised. Especially detrimental in this respect was the service and parking access proposed so close to the western edge of the building once moved.

Regarding impressions of the schematic design presented for the overall campus, the Board again urged the development team to take a “holistic” look at the site, rather than building by building, and to pursue real connections at the edges and to the neighborhood. The overall loss of green space on campus called out for inclusion of attractive and usable roof gardens dispersed throughout the new development. The Board noted that the proposed development continued to present a formidable, institutional edge to the larger community. The site need to be kept as open as possible; special concerns were raised regarding the loss of the existing open area at the northwest corner of the site and the wall-like barrier all along the western edge of the campus at 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW. Some terracing of the buildings to the west would seem warranted in collaboration with modulation that would allow for interweaving landscaping and architecture into a condition along the edge that would enhance the pedestrian experience of both neighbors and residents of the new buildings.

The next exercise, one member of the Board noted, was to break the whole down into its parts and to begin to humanize them. Another Board member stressed the same need by suggesting that the Board would like to see some studies of the actual usability of some of the spaces, especially the interstices between buildings. It was suggested that shadow and light studies could be very helpful here. With this guidance and these directives and that which had been given at the two earlier Early Design Guidance meetings, the Board members recommended that the project proceed to Master Use Permit application.