

**FINAL DESIGN REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS  
OF  
SOUTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

**January 26, 2009**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

**Project Number:** 3008739

**Address:** 5022 Martin Luther King Jr. Way South

**Applicant:** Sam Cameron, Rolluda Architects, for Linh Tran

**Board members present:** Brett Conway  
Steve Sindiong  
Michele Wang

**Board members absent:** Robert Mohn  
John Woodworth

**DCLU Staff Present:** Bruce P. Rips, AICP

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**Project Description:**

The project consists of the demolition of the existing retail building and construction of a new mixed use structure. The proposal includes four potential retail spaces at ground level with three residential units above for a total of two stories. The proposed retail spaces will total approximately 4,700 square feet and the residential units will total 4,110 square feet. Parking for approximately 13 vehicles is proposed both inside and outside of the structure.

The building plan forms an “L” shape set at angle from Martin Luther King Jr. Way South. At grade facing Martin Luther King Jr. Way, the proposed structure would contain potentially four commercial spaces looking into an area of three parking spaces. Directly above the commercial spaces, three residential units with two to three bedrooms each would have a series of surrounding balconies and decks overlooking MLK Jr. Way and the adjacent properties to the north and east.

The architect proposes vehicular access along the south property line with the driveway descending toward the east. Beneath the commercial spaces, the structure would house

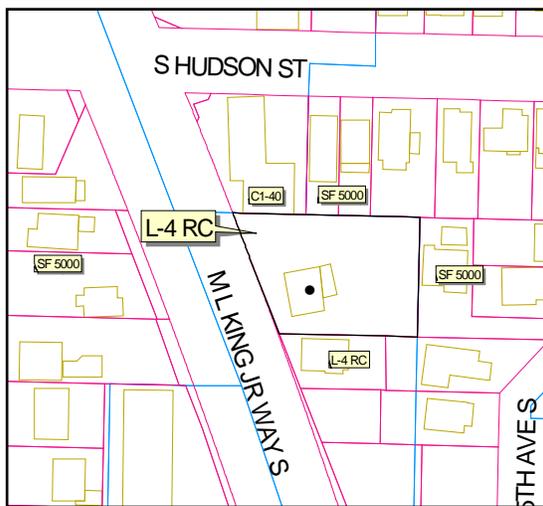
storage and five space parking spaces. Along the east property line, the proposal illustrates open space, additional parking spaces and a semi-enclosed area for trash and recycling.

At the Initial Recommendation meeting, the architect proposed brick (with brick banding) at the commercial level and at the west end of the residential floor, a metal clad elevator tower and horizontal siding to denote the residential portion. The design presented at the initial Recommendation did not entirely match the drawings provided in the packet for the Board. The proposed commercial area was expanded to the north with a residential deck above it. This triggered a departure request to decrease the required side setback. Other changes included alterations to the color and materials.

At the Final Recommendation meeting, the architect illustrated several changes to the design based on the guidance from the May 26<sup>th</sup> 2009 meeting. These included a reconfiguration of all open space, a readjustment of the north side setback, a reorientation of the parking in front of the structure, and additional landscape screening at the site's perimeters.

### Site and Vicinity

The irregular site comprises approximately 16,807 square feet with 119.5 linear feet along MLK Jr. Way S. From the arterial, the north and south property lines extend to the east and west by 174 and 130 feet respectively. The site's topography remains mostly level at the street, slopes about 6' in the first 50' from the west property line, and then drops dramatically toward the east. The land descends about 20' from the southwest corner of the property to the northeast.



The site lies within a Lowrise Four Residential Commercial Zone (L4 RC). This zoning classification allows residential densities of one unit per 600 square feet of property with a maximum 4,000 sq. ft. size limit on each business establishment.

Approximately one-third of the north property line lies adjacent to a C1-40, Commercial One with a 40 foot height limit, zone. The remaining zoning adjacent to the north property line as well as the east property line has a SF 5000 (Single Family) designation. The parcel to the south is also zoned L-4 RC. The parcels directly across

Martin Luther King Jr. Way S have a SF 5000 classification. The site falls within the "Columbia City Residential Urban Village" and the South Seattle Reinvestment Area.

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) classifies Martin Luther King Jr. Way S as a principal arterial. Located in the Light Rail Construction Impact Zone along the future light rail system route, the site lies near the Alaskan Street Station for the South Transit Light Rail

approximately three blocks to the north. Sound Transit recently located and installed one curb cut for access to the subject site.

The majority of development in the vicinity consists of single family structures. An automotive repair shop occupies the parcel north of the site and retail uses exist further north of that. There is a motel south and west of the site. Multifamily structures currently occupy properties south along MLK Jr. Way S with an additional multifamily project under development on a previously vacant lot. Recent development in the area consists mainly of additions and alterations to existing single family homes.

Before the initial Recommendation meeting, DPD discovered that the survey used by the architect was out of date due to the right of way changes from the installation of the light rail system. The location of the sidewalk in relationship to the property line along MLK Jr. Way S. sits much closer than depicted in the drawings. This has been corrected since discovery of the error.

Metro transit (bus route #42) serves the immediate area with a transit stop just north of the site on S Hudson St and MLK Jr. Way S.

### **DESIGN REVIEW BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY: JANUARY 26, 2010 MEETING**

On January 26, 2010, the Southeast Design Review Board convened for a second and final Recommendation meeting. The architect presented site, landscaping, and floor plans, and elevations for the Board members' consideration. The applicant requested three departures from the city's Land Use Code.

**Public Comment:** Six individuals signed-in at the Final Recommendation meeting. Comments directed to the Board concentrated on privacy and drainage issues between the subject project and the neighboring houses to the north and east. Installation of a proposed deck on the north side of the structure would compromise the privacy of the neighbors. The height and proximity of the deck would allow tenants to peer easily into the adjacent houses and yards. The same speaker requested the use of Pacific Wax Myrtle, a fuller and taller tree than the Emerald Green Arborvitae, as a screen or buffer between the properties. A neighbor asked for a solid fence separating the properties.

According to a neighbor, the adjacent houses sit lower than the applicant's property resulting in drainage run-off from one property to another. The speaker requested the construction of a well designed retaining wall to ensure that water remains on site. The wall shown on the plans should be extended westward.

A participant recommended the use of metal awnings rather than fabric ones in order to lower maintenance costs. (January 26, 2010)

Four individuals signed-in at the Initial Recommendation meeting. Comments focused on the following concerns: the lack of privacy due to the northeast deck's proximity to the neighbors; the close proximity of parking next to neighboring single family residences; the location of the trash collection area next to the neighbors' house when it could be fully contained inside the garage; and the need for more substantial fencing or wall between the neighbors and the proposed project.

One neighbor provided the Design Review Board with a list of questions and comments. She asked for the following revisions to the proposal: constraints on the amount of spillover lighting into the adjacent single family residences; greater amounts of green space; increased amounts of safety features to ensure security around the perimeter of the project site; and a maintenance management plan to ensure removal of litter, weeds, broken glass and graffiti. The individual also asked for a plan for garbage movement and pickup on garbage day. Large commercial garbage canisters on sidewalks impede pedestrian movement and create blight and dirty streets. Lots of children live in the area. Overall safety and cleanliness are important to the community. (May 26<sup>th</sup> 2009)

**Board Recommendations:** After considering the proposed design and the project context, hearing public comment and reconsidering the previously stated design priorities, the Design Review Board members came to the following recommendations on how the applicant met the identified design objectives. Italics designate the guidance from the initial Recommendation meeting.

#### **A. Site Planning**

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

The redesign of the landscaping in front of the building met with the Board's satisfaction. The Board recommended approval of the departure requesting the elimination of a wall or fence screening the parking. See departure matrix below. (January 26, 2010)

*The Board recommended that project comply with the city of Seattle's Land Use Code's requirements for quantity of screening and landscaping at the front of the building. Board members agreed that a wall or fence screening the parking was not needed; however, plants and shrubs should be of a sufficient height to screen the parking. (May 26, 2009)*

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

The architect redesigned the entrance to include a vestibule for the elevator. The Board approved the changes. (January 26, 2010)

*The Board recommended adding a small residential entry vestibule at street level to contain the elevator and possibly a second stairs to the upper level. (May 26, 2009)*

**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 revision of the structure's relationship to the side setback, ensuring a code compliant setback adjacent to the single family zone, met with the Board's approval. In turn, the Board recommended approval of the side setback departure along the portion of the same property line contiguous with the C1-40 zone.

The reconfiguration of the open space plan at the rear of the site would improve its function and provide better screening between the adjacent neighbors and the parking. The Board recommended that the retaining wall and fence be extended farther to the west to increase the separation between the properties. The applicant should explore adding more vegetation behind the retaining wall near the trash enclosure. (January 26, 2010)

*Considerable discussion focused on the proposed extension of the commercial space and the residential deck into the side setback along the northern property line. Due to the adjacency of the single family zone north of the site's property line, the Board will not recommend a setback departure in any of the area that abuts the Single Family 5000 zone. The Board, however, will consider a departure for the western portion of the side setback site adjacent to the C-40 zone as privacy and need for an adequate landscape buffer are not as necessary. The applicant will need to explain how the requested departure better meets the design review guidelines. Obtaining greater commercial square footage for the applicant could occur by other strategies: shifting the building closer to MLK Jr. Way S. and/or reducing the amount of parking.*

*The location of the most useable open space should occur in the northeast area of the site adjacent to the back yards of the neighboring single family homes. This entails removing the extra parking spaces (numbered 10, 11, 12 and possibly spaces 8 and 9) and reconfiguring the rectilinear island of open space along the east property line in order to consolidate the open space and make it contiguous with the proposed structure. Rather than have children cross the driveway and parking spaces to play in the open space, they would be able to exit the building and enter directly onto the play area. It creates continuity of landscaping among the neighbors and augments the sense of privacy.*

*The proposed placement of the garbage/recycle collection area near the neighboring residences remains problematic. Locating the collection area in the basement area near the parking is preferable. However, if the applicant prefers the southwest corner location, the Board recommends a landscaped area immediately surrounding three sides with trees capable of shielding the wall or fence enclosing the dumpsters. See D-6. (May 26, 2009)*

**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.**

The Board expressed its satisfaction with the addition of an entry vestibule for the elevator. The reconfigured parking area also met the Board's approval. (January 26, 2010)

*An entry vestibule for the elevator and secondary stairs will provide better access for the tenants and help create a nicer transition between residences and the street. A reconfigured parking lot (see guidance D-4) and full landscaping between the parking lot and the Martin Luther King Jr. Way right of way will help meet the guideline. (May 26, 2009)*

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

The Board noted its satisfaction with the overall redesign of the open space. (January 26, 2010)

*Much of the landscaping presented to the Board appeared isolated and disconnected from the apartment tenants. The Board recommended consolidating much of the open space. Landscape areas to the rear of the property should be contiguous to the proposed structure as well as to some of the adjoining residential properties. These could be reconfigured nicely in the northeastern portion of the site. Children and adults will more likely use the outdoor area if it is safe, removed from the driveway and parking spaces, and well designed.*

*Landscaping as a buffer or screen should occur along the south property line (see guidance A-8) particularly between the bulk of the southern portion of the proposed structure and the neighboring house.*

*The Board will not approve a departure request reducing the quantity of open space or landscaping. (May 26, 2009)*

**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.**

The revised landscape plan had additional vegetation along both sides of the driveway providing for a decrease in its width. The Board approved the changes. (January 26, 2010)

*The Board requested a reduction in the driveway width extending from the curb cut to the rear of the site. The Board members will entertain a departure from driveway width if needed. It appears excessive for the amount of vehicles using it. Landscaping should be added along the south property line in order to create a buffer between the driveway and the adjacent home. (May 26, 2009)*

**B. Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility**

**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 the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.

*The Board did not think that height, bulk and scale concerns applied to the current design. (May 26, 2009)*

**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.

The architect responded to the earlier guidance by increasing the size of the second floor window closest to the street and substituting transparent glazing for glass block. (January 26, 2010)

*In order to promote safety by having “eyes on the street”, the Board recommends replacing the columnar shaped, glass block window on the west façade’s second floor with more conventional (and transparent) residential windows. (May 26, 2009)*

**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 façade walls.

The Board members encouraged the architect to eliminate the cornice at the elevator tower to allow the tower to read as a singular architectural element on the facade. Adding a more delicate canopy over the door to the elevator vestibule would provide needed weather protection. (January 26, 2010)

*The east elevation has a large expanse of blank wall between the garage and the residential floor. This portion of the wall should have windows. The Board understands the need for tenant use of interior commercial wall space; however, the Board members recommended placing the windows close to the ceiling in order to maintain wall area for back office use. (May 26, 2009)*

**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.

Changes to the south elevation in response to the Board’s guidance met with approval. On the north elevation, the brick should not step down as it approaches the west elevation. The

brick, in fact, should wrap around onto the west façade creating three bands of brick separated by the two black courses and the soldier course at top.

The Board recommended applying a more consistent pattern of fenestration to the facades. The residential windows on the west façade should extend higher with window lites or panes similar to those on the south elevation. The windows should align with the transoms above the residential doors. Windows on the east façade should also possess the same consistency. The middle bay of ribbon windows above the garage should extend to the pilaster.

The awing over the windows on the west elevation does not appear to have a function. The Board encouraged the architect to eliminate it as it does not have an entrance or a walkway beneath it. (January 26, 2010)

*The portion of the south elevation closest to MLK Jr. Way S. has considerable visibility from the street and sidewalk. The Board recommends extending the brick to cover the second floor so that it wraps around the corner from portion on the west elevation already faced with brick. The brick would terminate at the metal clad elevator shaft. (May 26, 2009)*

#### **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.**

The Board did not recommend any changes to the revised plans for landscaping in front of the proposed building. (January 26, 2010)

*The Board recommended expanding the small plaza to the north of the parking area and using plantings rather than a hard surface. See guidance A-2, A-6 and D-4. Reconfiguration of the parking spaces should assist in creating more area for landscaping. (May 26, 2009)*

**D-4 Design of Parking Lots Near Sidewalks. Parking lots near sidewalks should provide adequate security and lighting, avoid encroachment of vehicles onto the sidewalk, and minimize the visual clutter of parking lot signs and equipment.**

Accepting the revisions to the parking lot, the Board provided no further guidance. (January 26, 2010)

*The Board recommends shifting the three parking spaces 90 degrees. Backing by vehicles would occur in the primary driveway creating additional open space and landscaping opportunities. The walkway and plaza (shown with benches and red pavers in the landscape plans) should be expanded with more planting area. (May 26, 2009)*

**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.

As stated above, the Board encouraged the applicant to increase the amount of vegetation surrounding the dumpster area. The Board expressed its satisfaction with the recycling/dumpster location. (January 26, 2010)

*See the Board discussion and guidance A-5. By the next Recommendation meeting, the architect will need to present a credible plan based on the advice of a hauling company on how garbage and recycling trucks will maneuver ingress and egress on the site. (May 26, 2009)*

**D-7 Personal Safety and Security.** Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.

The Board recommended adding lighting at the tenant entries off the deck on the west elevation. Overall, the placement of the lighting fixtures on the elevations should not appear haphazard but as a well thought out composition. (January 26, 2010)

*See guidelines C-1 and D-10. (May 26, 2009)*

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

Discrete blade signs met with the Board's approval. However, the Board members opposed the future placement of larger signs than those shown on the west elevation, preferring a monument sign in the area between the plaza and the sidewalk. (January 26, 2010)

**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 evening hours.

Ensuring the elimination of spillover lighting onto the neighbors, the Board recommended that the architect provide cut sheets on the MUP and construction plans illustrating lighting fixtures that prevent the transmission of light over the property lines. The Board also conditioned the project to have security lighting along the north elevation adjacent to the commercial zone. The Land Use Planner will review and approve the choices of lighting fixtures. (January 26, 2010)

*A lighting concept plan will be required for the next Recommendation meeting. It should promote a sense of security along the sidewalk and path to the entrances. It also needs to*

*address the landscaped areas along the site's edges, yet limit spillover lighting onto the neighbors' properties. (May 26, 2009)*

**D-12 Residential Entries and Transitions.** For residential projects in commercial zones, the space between the residential entry and the sidewalk should be provide security and privacy for residents and be visually interesting 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.

See response to Guidance A-3. (January 26, 2010)

*The Board recommends a residential entry vestibule facing the parking area. This will enclose the elevator (or possibly a resident tenant staircase) and provide a nicer transition between the apartments and the street. (May 26, 2009)*

## **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.

No further guidance was provided. (January 26, 2010)

*See guidance A-5, A-7 and A-8. Consolidating open space areas at the rear of the site, adding landscaping along the south property line and surrounding the garbage/recycling enclosure with trees will emphasize continuity with adjacent properties. (May 26, 2009)*

**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.

The applicant will need to add a bicycle rack near the front of the building for commercial customers and tenant visitors. (January 26, 2010)

*Limited amounts of landscaping were shown at the rear of the site. More generous amounts of plantings and play area should be added to the reconfigured open space at the rear of the site. Plantings should be added at the small plaza north of the parking spaces, to the south property line and surrounding the garbage/recycling area, and along the portion of the south elevation closest to the driveway. (May 26, 2009)*

**Recommendations:** The recommendations summarized below were based on the plans and models submitted at the January 26th, 2010 meeting. Design, siting or architectural details not specifically identified or altered in these recommendations are expected to remain as

presented in the plans and other drawings available at the January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010 public meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities, and reviewing the plans and renderings, the Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design and the requested development standard departures from the requirements of the Land Use Code (listed below). The Board recommends the following CONDITION for the project. (Authority referred in the letter and number in parenthesis):

1. Extend the retaining wall and fence farther to the west to increase the separation between the site and the residential properties to the north. (A-5)
2. Add brick to the north elevation where it approaches the northwest corner. The brick should wrap around onto the west façade creating a continuous base. (C-4)
3. Extend the residential windows on the west elevation higher to align with the upper portion of the transoms above the residential doors. Use segmented lites or panes similar to those on the south elevation. (C-4)
4. Create greater consistency among the fenestration on the east elevation. (C-4)
5. Add lighting at the tenant entries off the deck on the west elevation. (D-7)
6. Ensure elimination of spillover lighting onto the neighbors by choosing appropriate lighting fixtures with shields. The Land Use Planner will review and approve the choices of lighting fixtures. (D-10)
7. Provide security lighting along the north elevation adjacent to the commercial zone. The Land Use Planner will review and approve the choices of lighting fixtures. (D-10)
8. Provide a bicycle rack near the front of the building for commercial customers and tenant visitors. (E-2)

**DEPARTURES**

STANDARD	REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	JUSTIFICATION	RECOM-MENDATION
1. Screening of parking. SMC 23.45.018D	Parking shall be screened from view from the street by a fence or wall between 5 and 6 feet high, with 3' of landscaping on the street side of the wall.	To allow screening by landscaping only. No wall or fence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Providing a well landscaped plaza and parking area is more in keeping with E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building or Site by providing a more inviting frontage to the property.</li> </ul>	Recommended Approval.
2. Maximum structure depth. SMC 23.86.016B2	The maximum depth shall be 65% of the distance between the midpoint of the front lot line and the midpoint of the rear lot line. Project total equals 98' 8".	To allow an overall depth of 107' 8". Exceeds required structure depth by 9'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The structure responds to the non-rectangular site (A-1). On average, the structure would meet the structure depth requirement since the south portion of the "L" is less than the Code requirement.</li> </ul>	Recommended Approval.
3. Side setback. SMC 23.45.014C	Average setback is 14'. Minimum setback is 7'.	From 5'3" to 7'3". North side setback is code compliant adjacent to SF 5000 zone. Reduced setback adjacent to the C1-40 zone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Potential reduces security problems adjacent to the commercial structure. Guideline D-7.</li> </ul>	Recommended Approval.

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