



City of Seattle  
Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

**Department of Planning & Development**  
D.M. Sugimura, Director

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**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE PRIORITIES  
OF THE  
CAPITOL/FIRST HILL/CENTRAL AREA DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

**Project Number:** 3009796

**Address:** 500 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue

**Applicant:** Roger Tucker, Environmental Works,  
for Capitol Hill Housing

**Meeting Date:** May 6, 2009  
**Report Date:** May 22, 2009

**Board members present:** Evan Bourquard  
Brian Cavanaugh  
Lisa Picard  
Wolf Saar  
Sharon Sutton, Chair

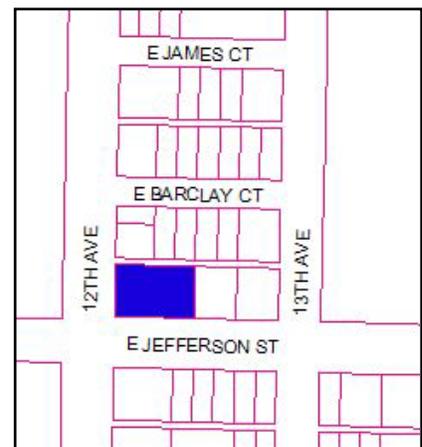
**Board members absent:** None

**DPD staff present:** Lisa Rutzick, Land Use Planner

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**SITE & VICINITY**

The 9,799 SF rectangular shaped sites are comprised of several lots, containing a surface parking lot. The site is zoned NC2-40 and can be increased to 65 feet. The applicant is pursuing a Contract Rezone for the site to Neighborhood Commercial 2 with a 65-foot height limit (NC2-65'). The site lies within a Pedestrian (P) zone as well as the 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue Urban Center Village Overlay.



The site meets the corner of 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the west and East Jefferson Street to the south. An alley borders the site to the north. Abutting the site to the east is a one story, commercial building and a three story mixed use building beyond.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposal includes the construction of a structure that would include approximately 40 residential units, 5,000 square feet of ground level retail uses and surface grade parking for approximately six vehicles.

## **DESIGN PRESENTATION**

Four schemes were presented at the Early Design Guidance meeting. All of the options include surface grade parking accessed from the alley and ground level commercial use divided into two separate spaces, facing the streets. The first scheme (Option 1) proposes decks on the south side of the building facing East Jefferson Street creating a vertical notch along the south façade with the residential lobby entrance directly below the notch. The second and preferred alternative (Option 2) also proposes decks on the south side of the building facing East Jefferson Street creating a vertical notch along the south façade, but in this alternative, the deck area are in varying heights and projections creating a staggering of the deck features. In this option, the main building entrance is also directly below the vertical notch. The third (Option 3) scheme locates all of the residential open spaces (decks) at the building corner facing the intersection with the main building entrance at the corner. The fourth (Option 4) scheme locates all of the residential open spaces (decks) in a vertical alignment along the buildings west facade.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Approximately 16 members of the public attended the Early Design Guidance meeting. The following comments were offered:

- Supportive of CHHP's previous work and efforts on the 12th Avenue redevelopment plan.
- Concern that the design some of the newer apartment buildings in the neighborhood is lacking. Would like this building to utilize higher quality materials and not use vinyl siding, corrugated metal siding or fake balconies. Also feels that the design should endeavor to be less blocky and have more distinction between the levels. Agree with the gateway concept that development on this corner offers.
- Would like to see more support for balconies located at the corner location.
- Would like to see each unit have its own individual balcony rather than the proposed single communal balcony on each floor.
- Encourage integration of secure bicycle parking and storage near the parking area for building tenants.
- Support the proposed balcony concept and would discourage Option 3 showing the balconies at the corner.

## **DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES**

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 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* of highest priority to this project. The Board also consulted with the recently adopted neighborhood specific guidelines *Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines*.

**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.

**Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:**

- Retain or increase the width of sidewalks.**
- Provide street trees with tree grates or in planter strips, using appropriate species to provide summer shade, winter light, and year-round visual interest.**
- Vehicle entrances to buildings should not dominate the streetscape.**
- Orient townhouse structures to provide pedestrian entrances to the sidewalk.**
- For buildings that span a block and “front” on two streets, each street frontage should receive individual and detailed site planning and architectural design treatments to complement the established streetscape character.**
- New development in commercial zones should be sensitive to neighboring residential zones. While a design with a commercial character is appropriate along Broadway, compatibility with residential character should be emphasized along the other streets.**

The Board is very interested in the treatment and programming of the ground level commercial uses and design efforts that will further engage the commercial activity with the public realm. Example of this include large transparent storefront windows, opportunities for sidewalk cafes, or other features that allow the commercial uses to express and individualize themselves.

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

**Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:**

- Provide for sidewalk retail opportunities and connections by allowing for the opening of the storefront to the street.**
- Provide for outdoor eating and drinking opportunities on the sidewalks by allowing for the opening the restaurant or café windows to the sidewalk and installing outdoor seating while maintaining pedestrian flow.**
- Install clear glass windows along the sidewalk to provide visual access into the retail or dining activities that occur inside. Do not block views into the interior spaces with the backs of shelving units or with posters.**

See A-2.

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

**Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:**

- Incorporate quasi-public open space with new residential development or redevelopment, with special focus on corner landscape treatments and courtyard entries.
- Create substantial courtyard-style open space that is visually accessible to the public view.
- Set back development where appropriate to preserve a view corridor.
- Set back upper floors to provide solar access to the sidewalk and/or neighboring properties.
- Mature street trees have a high value to the neighborhood and departures from development standards that an arborist determines would impair the health of a mature tree are discouraged.
- Use landscape materials that are sustainable, requiring minimal irrigation or fertilizer.
- Use porous paving materials to minimize stormwater run-off.

The Board appreciated the concept of communal, common balcony areas at each floor, thereby creating larger, more flexible spaces that will not only serve the tenants, but also become an organizing element of the building. This organizing element also provides the necessary modulation and breaking down of the massing and scale. The Board warned that these areas should be well programmed to avoid becoming storage space for residents. Towards this end, the Board strongly encouraged the incorporation of bike parking and storage spaces at the ground level or in another convenient location. The Board also encouraged the railings of these common deck areas to be transparent to create a light and open feel.

**A-10 Corner Lots. Buildings on corner lot should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.**

**Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:**

- Incorporate residential entries and special landscaping into corner lots by setting the structure back from the property lines.
- Provide for a prominent retail corner entry.

The Board was uncomfortable with Option 3 and the over-emphasis of the corner by locating all of the common deck area at the corner which is less hospitable to open space uses given the volume of vehicular traffic at this intersection. That said, the Board agreed that the gateway feeling of this location can be successfully realized by using good quality, durable materials to create a building with a strong presence at this corner.

<b>B. Height, Bulk, and Scale</b>
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**B-1 Height, Bulk & 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**

**Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:**

- Break up building mass by incorporating different façade treatments to give the impression of multiple, small-scale buildings, in keeping with the established development pattern.
- Consider existing views to downtown Seattle, the Space Needle, Elliott Bay and the Olympic Mountains, and incorporate site and building design features that may help to preserve those views from public rights-of-way.
- Design new buildings to maximize the amount of sunshine on adjacent sidewalks throughout the year.

Three of the five Board members expressed support for Option 2 which offers both good solar access to the residential open spaces from the south, as well as solar access to the internal corridors by being located at the mid-point of the corridor rather than at the end. (The other two Board members felt that Option 4 is more residential in character and belongs on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue). The Board discussed that stepping down or eroding the uppermost floor to respond to the lower scaled height limit of the abutting lot to the east would be a sensitive gesture to the surrounding, area with a lower height limit. The Board also encouraged the building massing to be sensitive to shadow impacts to the north.

See also A-7.

**C. Architectural Elements**

- 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.**

**Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:**

- Incorporate signage that is consistent with the existing or intended character of the building and the neighborhood.
- Solid canopies or fabric awnings over the sidewalk are preferred.
- Avoid using vinyl awnings that also serve as big, illuminated signs.
- Use materials and design that is compatible with the structures in the vicinity if those represent the desired neighborhood character.

The Board looks forward to seeing a cohesive architectural design that strives for a bold design that is reflective of the varied community and sets a precedent for high quality development in the neighborhood. The Board suggested that some of the proposed communal deck areas could become two-story spaces, resulting in a common deck at the second and fourth floors, each with a two story height, creating a dramatic and airy space for residents.

- 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.**

**Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:**

- Provide operable windows, especially on storefronts.**
- Consider each building as a high-quality, long-term addition to the neighborhood; exterior design and materials should exhibit permanence and quality appropriate to the Capitol Hill neighborhood.**
- The use of applied foam ornamentation and EIFS (Exterior Insulation & Finish System) is discouraged, especially on ground level locations.**

The Board unanimously and vigorously encouraged the use of high quality building materials for the proposed development. The material palette should be weightier and stronger to give a sense of permanence and grounding at this corner. The Board also agreed that the materials should be simple and durable. The Board also noted that the 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue façade is a critical elevation where brick, a material that is truly simple and durable, would be ideal.

**D. Pedestrian Environment**

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

The Board agreed that the parking areas should be well-lit and have the ability to be secured in the evening. The Board also noted that the ground level massing should avoid any hidden areas or notches.

- 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 noted that both transparency and lighting along the street and alley sides of the site will be critical in activating and providing security at this location.

**E. Landscaping**

- E-2 Landscape 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 Board stressed that the project should include green buffers, such as street trees and well-landscaped open spaces, to soften the scale of this larger sized building. The Board also urged that the streetscape details be well considered to include pedestrian scaled landscaping and lighting. The Board does not support the proposed narrow landscape strip against the building.

The Board looks forward to reviewing details of a well-programmed, detailed design for the open spaces integrated throughout the project, as well as sections and plans of the

street level details. The Board expects to see significant and dramatic vegetation included in the common open spaces and is excited to see “green” elements integrated into the building.

### **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

No departures from the development standards were proposed at this phase.

### **NEXT STEPS**

#### **MUP Application:**

1. Submit application for Master Use Permit (MUP) application. Please call Lisa Rutzick (at 206-386-9049) when you have scheduled your MUP intake appointment.
2. Please include a written response to the guidance provided in this EDG. Per Attachment B of Client Assistance Memo 238, plan on embedding four 11x17 colored and shadowed elevations, landscape and right-of-way improvement plans and three-dimensional street level vignettes into the front of the MUP plan set (4 per sheet) as Design Review sheets.
3. A traffic study will be required as part of the MUP process.

#### **Recommendation Meeting:**

4. The Board would like to review details of the open spaces, specifically those associated with the communal deck areas.
5. The Board would like to review three-dimensional renderings showing the proposed streetscape character and how the ground level uses, details and design relate to the sidewalk.
6. Please submit a color and materials board.
7. Please provide a series of colored renderings and/or graphics showing the proposed character of development from the pedestrian perspective.
8. Please also prepare a conceptual signage plan.
9. Please submit a conceptual lighting plan.
10. Please provide photos of buildings that provided architectural cues to the design development of this project.