



City of Seattle  
Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

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

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

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

**Project Number:** 3010211

**Address:** 412 Broadway

**Applicant:** Dave Heater, Ankrom Moisan Architects,  
for Lorig & Associates

**Meeting Date:** July 15, 2009  
**Report Date:** July 27, 2009

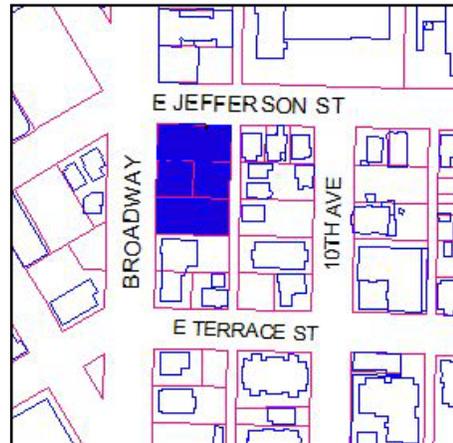
**Board members present:** Brian Cavanaugh  
Lisa Picard  
Wolf Saar  
Sharon Sutton, Chair

**Board members absent:** Evan Bourquard

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

**SITE & VICINITY**

The 14,400 SF rectangular shaped site is comprised of three lots with 180' of frontage on Broadway and 120' on East Jefferson Street. The site is currently zoned under two designations. The northern third of the site is zoned NC3-65' and the southern two-thirds are zoned MR, multi-family midrise. The applicant is pursuing a Contract Rezone for the site to Neighborhood Commercial 3 with an 85-foot height limit (NC3-85') with a self imposed building height of 75 feet.



The rear of the property abuts an alley to the east, while the southern boundary is shared with a 6-story apartment house. The vacant site is currently marked by a deep excavation (up to 60') made necessary by environmental remediation work.

The site slopes in 2 directions from its high point at the intersection of Broadway and Jefferson, falling approximately 10' from Broadway to the alley and 6' from Jefferson to the south property line. The site slopes slightly on the East side and South side.

The current comprehensive plan designation for the site is "Urban Village". The site is characterized by the confluence of 4 different zoning districts: MR (Multi-family Residential, Midrise) to the south; NC3-65' (Neighborhood Commercial) to the west; NC3-85' (Neighborhood Commercial) to the north and MIO-105' (Major Institution Overlay District) to the northeast. Existing land use, adjacent to the site, reflects the zoning above. The site also lies exactly at the boundary between two neighborhoods: First Hill to the west and 12th Avenue / Squire Park to the east. In addition, The Yesler Terrace / Little Saigon neighborhood begins one block to the south on the other side of Boren Avenue.

Land uses directly adjacent to the site include:

- North of and adjacent to the property group and across East Jefferson Street is 500 Broadway, a mixed use apartment.
- Northeast of the property group and across East Jefferson Street is 919 East James Street, a Seattle University Dormitory.
- Northwest of the property group and across Broadway is 515 Minor Avenue, the First Hill Medical Building.
- West of and adjacent to the property group and across Broadway is a commercial office building.
- South of and adjacent to the property group is the "Cal Anderson House", a multi-family residential building.
- East of and adjacent to the property group across the alley is 917 East Jefferson Street, a mixed use duplex (residential and commercial).
- East of and adjacent to the property group across the alley is 415 10th Avenue, a 75-unit apartment building.

Broadway street is designated a minor arterial. E. Jefferson is designated a collector arterial and is an important transit route. The bus-stop in front of the site on Jefferson provides intermittent bursts of foot traffic all day long. The site is currently served by public transit.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposal includes the construction of a six story structure that would include approximately 95 residential units, ground level retail uses and below grade parking for approximately 120 vehicles.

## **DESIGN PRESENTATION**

Two code-compliant schemes, and one scheme requiring a contract rezone approval were presented. All of the options include a driveway entrance from the alley, a residential courtyard on the alley side, a residential lobby on Broadway Avenue, and approximately 7,000 SF of commercial area on the ground level.

The first scheme (Massing Alternative 1) proposed retail and residential units to form a “U” along E Jefferson St, Broadway and a return leg on the South side of the site. A courtyard was proposed to the East of the building, on the alley side, almost at the mid-block. The massing follows the zoning requirements required by both NC3-65 zone and the MR zone.

The second scheme (Massing Alternative 2) proposed retail and residential units to form a “U” along E Jefferson St, Broadway and a return leg on the South side of the site. A courtyard was proposed to the East of the building, on the alley side, almost at the mid block. This scheme allows flat plates at all levels including the roof, and meets the building height at the 60’-0” limit imposed by MR zone.

The third scheme, preferred by the applicant, (Massing Alternative 3) proposed a contract rezone for the whole site from NC3-65’ and MR zone to NC3-85’ zone with self imposed 70’-0” height limit. The extra height would allow the retail floor level to be raised to meet the sidewalk while maintaining the desired ceiling heights. The proposed retail and residential units form a “U” along E Jefferson St, Broadway and a return leg on the South side of the site. The building is set back 7’-0” at street level on Broadway to enhance the pedestrian experience along the retail spaces on the ground level. A courtyard is proposed to the East of the building, on the alley side, almost at the mid-block.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

- Clarification of the vehicular exiting onto the alley, the two foot dedication and the additional five foot setback shown as a landscape buffer along the alley. Also interested in the type of retail anticipated for the proposed commercial spaces.
- Concern that the proposed building does not respond to the context and that the massing studies misrepresent the existing context. Prefer residential uses at street level and less commercial uses at ground level. Would like to see terraced open spaces along Broadway instead of decks along the alley. Objects to the departures because the proposed design doesn’t show how the project better meets the intent of the guidelines.
- Prefer retail uses at ground level. Clarification of the use programming for the south end of the building and the division of the commercial space into multiple retail uses.
- Questioned whether the designers considered going up to 85 feet in height on the Neighborhood Commercial zoned portion of the building and not proposing to increase height on the Midrise zoned portion. Also questioned the viability of the retail uses next to the bus stop.
- Clarification that the proposed width of the sidewalk along Jefferson is 12 feet.

## **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 adopted neighborhood specific guidelines *Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines*.

### **A. Site Planning**

**A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics. The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as prominent intersections and unusual topography.**

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

The Board discussed the location of the residential entrance and agreed that it should be shifted away from the prominent corner intersection and instead be located on the north façade or at the south end of the west facade. This allows the programming of this corner to become a more vibrant commercial space that is not competing with the residential entrance.

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

The Board agreed that commercial uses (and not residential uses) at the ground level are highly desirable at this location.

**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 Board agreed that the massing and modulation of the proposed building should strive to create a good transition to the residential uses to the east in terms of optimizing solar access and minimizing shadow impacts, as well as reducing any sense of looming over the downhill neighborhood.

**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.**

The Board is excited by the potential of this location at this prominent intersection to ground this corner with a distinctive, strong form activated by commercial uses in larger commercial spaces. The Board recommended locating the residential entrance away from the corner location in order to allow the commercial uses and character to be uninterrupted.

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

- 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**

The Board will be interested in how the proposed building is viewed from the east and is sensitive to the properties located in the lower topography, zone and scale to the east. Stepping down or eroding the uppermost floor(s) to respond to the lower scaled height limit of the neighborhood to the east may be appropriate. The Board also encouraged the design of the building massing to be sensitive to negative shadow impacts on properties to the east.

## **C. Architectural Elements**

- 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.**
- 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.**

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 wants to see good quality materials consistently used throughout the building.

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

The Board agreed that the scale of the neighborhood to the south and east of the site should inform the massing of the building forms. The building should also read as a residential structure that is articulated to relate to the existing context and platting.

- 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.**

The Board unanimously 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.

## **D. Pedestrian Environment**

- 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.**

The Board was particularly concerned that the eastern portion of the north façade, adjacent to the bus stop should not be a blank wall; rather it should be activated with views to and from the building.

- 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 first floor along the street and alley facades should be well-lit.

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

- 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 the design should create both transparency and good lighting along the street and alley sides of the site to activate and provide security at this location. The Board is supportive of the proposed tall retail spaces at the corner and along the street.

## **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 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 at ground level.

- E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions. The landscape design should take advantage of the special on site conditions.**

The Board was very pleased with the proposed setback for wider sidewalk along Broadway and the landscape buffer along the alley.

## **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

Two departures from the development standards are proposed at this phase.

1. **Residential Use at Street Level (SMC 23.47A.005.C3):** The Code requires that residential uses may be no more than 20% of the street level, street facing facades. The design proposal shows an increase of residential uses at street level of 35.5% (an increase of 16'-6" over the maximum allowed).

The Board was generally not inclined towards entertaining this departure request as presented and felt that the uses at ground level should emphasize and encourage commercial uses rather than residential, uses. The Board agreed that if the retail spaces were exceptionally designed and well-located, then some flexibility might be considered.

2. **Alley Setback (SMC 23.47A.014.B3):** The Codes requires a setback along the alley façade of 15' for portions of the structure over 13' in height to a maximum of 40' with an additional setback at the rate of 2' for every 10' of height exceeding 40'. The design proposal shows an encroachment into the setback above 40' by extending the plane of the wall upwards without stepping back.

The entire building is set back seven feet from Broadway to accommodate the power line clearance. This condition creates a wider sidewalk and pedestrian area that is desirable on that edge, but pushes the building to the east to make up for the lost space. The proposed design shows a uniform setback at the third story that would allow a change in material to wrap the corner, enhancing the aesthetic of the building.

The Board was not inclined towards entertaining this departure request given the additional height proposed, as well as the potential bulk and scale impacts to the neighborhood to the east.

## **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 at ground level.
5. The Board would like to review three-dimensional sketches and 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.