



City of Seattle

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



FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3010954

Address: 160 20th Avenue

Applicant: Rico Quirindongo for DKA Architects

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, September 28, 2011

Board Members Present: Evan Bourquard (Chair)
Dawn Bushnaq
Dan Foltz (substituting)
Wolf Saar
Chip Wall

Board Members Absent: Lisa Picard

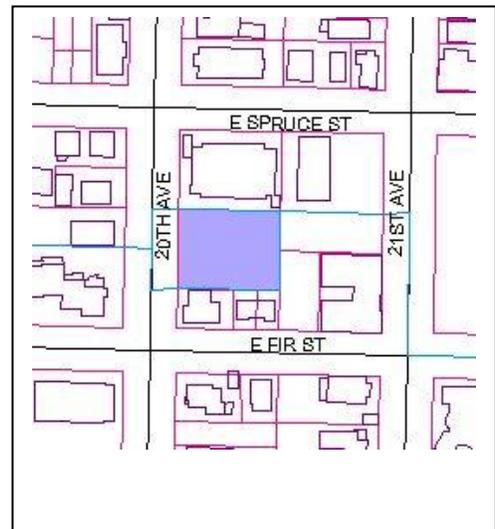
DPD Staff Present: Shelley Bolser, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Lowrise 3 (L-3)

Nearby Zones: (North) L-1, adjacent parcel
(South) L-3
(East) L-3
(West) L-1 and L-3, across the street

Lot Area: 15,360 square feet (this parcel only)



Current Development: The site is part of a larger development site that includes a two-story early 20th century building used as a private school, and a vacant two-story mid-century office building. The parcel proposed for development is currently occupied by surface parking.

Access: Vehicular access to the site is from curb cuts at 20th Ave. There are no alleys adjacent to the site. Pedestrian access to the private school building is from 20th Ave and E. Spruce St.

Surrounding Development: The private school building and vacant office building are located on this site, north of the parcel proposed for development. A four story early 20th century apartment building is located to the east. One to two story residential buildings are located to the south and across the street to the west.

ECAs: There are no Environmentally Critical Areas on or adjacent to the site.

The site is located near the center of the 23rd Ave and S. Jackson-Union Residential Urban Village in the Central District.

Uses in the area include single family and multi-family (stacked flats and townhouses) residential, institution, and park. Some nearby institutions include Tolliver Temple at 20th Ave and E. Fir St, New Hope Missionary Baptist Church at 21st Ave and E. Fir St, and Yat Sen Cultural Center at 21st Ave and E. Spruce St.

Neighborhood Character: Building heights range from one to four stories. Existing development represents a wide range of ages and styles of construction. The area slopes down to the east. The subject parcel is relatively flat with only an 8 foot difference in grade across the site. The entire private school development site has a difference of 32 feet in grade from west to east. The site is not mapped with any environmentally critical areas in the City of Seattle mapping system.

Open space in the area includes Spruce Street Mini Park, bordered by 21st Ave, E. Fir St and E. Spruce St. Other open space includes Pratt Park near E. Yesler Way and 20th Ave (approximately two blocks to the south) and Dr. Blanche Lavizzo Park near S. Washington St. and 21st Ave (approximately three blocks to the south).

The adjacent and nearby streets are all non-arterials. The nearest arterial is E. Yesler Way, a minor arterial approximately two blocks to the south. Parking in the area is located mostly on-street or in surface parking lots.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed development includes 16 apartments in two buildings. Open space and walkways would connect the apartments with the private school building and sidewalks at 20th Ave and 21st Ave.

The proposal is proposed in accordance with the new Lowrise Residential Code, effective April 19, 2011. The site zoning is now LR3.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: April 6, 2011

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Three alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options include structure(s) with pedestrian connections between the First Place School building and the proposal.

The first scheme (Option A) showed a single 4-story apartment building, built to the maximum zoning allowed under the new Lowrise Residential section of the Land Use Code. No parking was proposed with this option. Open space was located at the northeast corner, and amenity space for the residents was located on the roof.

The second scheme (Option B) showed two four-story buildings with a long wall on the east-west axis. The south building was reduced to three stories, east of the street front module. The roof of this building included a green roof with resident access. Open space was located between the buildings, at the southeast corner, and in two narrower areas between the buildings and adjacent to the private school building. The courtyard between the two proposed buildings also included open stairwell and landings for residents to access the units. Residents would access the units from a secure entry point at the north side of the building. Community space would be provided at the east side of the north building.

The third scheme (Option C) showed a very similar design as the second scheme, with one less story of building height and reduced stairways and landings between the buildings. The north building and the west portion of the south building were 3 stories tall, and the east portion of the south building was 2 stories tall. This was intended to provide additional light and air to the interior courtyard and the private school classrooms, as well as respond to the lower height buildings in the nearby context. The north walkway to the building entry was framed by a portico structure adjacent to the sidewalk.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 4 members of the public signed in at this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Appreciated the preferred concept, compared to the other options, but had concerns about the unclear entry point and the narrow spaces between the buildings

- Stated that the front setback should be consistent with the buildings on either side
- Concerned with the removal of parking spaces from the site, given the private school busses and employees, and the proposed residents to be added (DPD staff responded that no parking is required for residential development under the new Land Use Code sections, and parking demand comments should be separately addressed to the Land Use Planner, outside of the Design Review meeting)
- Concerned with the tall staircase protruding into the interior courtyard and the narrow pedestrian paths between the north building and the Private school building; light and air is needed to activate these areas

FINAL RECOMMENDATION MEETING: September 28, 2011

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Changes to the proposal since EDG include relocation of the primary entry to the west façade at 20th Avenue, centralizing the open space areas, using the community room in the north building to connect the outdoor open space areas in the courtyards via roll up doors, and removing the parking space from the proposal.

The proposed open space scheme includes an internal courtyard area, a teaching garden and young children’s play area near the southeast corner, a barbeque area and basketball court near the east property line, and an outdoor classroom between the north building and the private school. The outdoor classroom included patio level with the ground floor of the north building and a set of steps leading down to the ground floor of the private school building. The basketball court would be accessed via this area and would be separated from the barbeque area by a retaining wall and grade change. The outdoor classroom could be connected to the interior courtyard by two sets of roll up doors on either side of the community room in the north building. The outdoor classroom area was shown approximately 5’ below the sidewalk at 20th Avenue. A fence and brick gate structure and set of stairs separated the outdoor classroom from the sidewalk.

The applicant explained that the grade changes across the site were designed to allow ADA access from the southwest corner of the site to the primary residential entry and the ground floor of the private school. The green roof was also removed from the open space plan to allow for more consolidated areas of open space and reduce stair cases in the courtyard area. The remaining stair cases were designed to maximize light and air to the courtyard area. Open spaces were oriented for maximum sun exposure and ventilation.

The east edge of the site also included a trash and recycling area, which would be collected from the adjacent parking lot to the west under an agreement.

The proposed materials included cementitious board planks, refurbished wood, and brick. The patios and retaining walls were shown as concrete.

No departures were requested.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 12 members of the public signed in at this Final Recommendation meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Support for affordable housing
- The design will address neighborhood concerns (noise, trash collection, parking)
- 2-3 bedroom units should be located in the north building, and 1-bedroom units should be located in the south building, since the noise from play areas would then just be toward the units with families.
- Sustainable strategies such as solar panels, cisterns, LED lights should be included in the design.
- The garage doors at the courtyards could create a security concern. Consider some other type of access doors.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

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. The Board identified the Citywide Design Guidelines & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for 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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that the location, height, and appearance of retaining walls at the edges of the property are unclear at this stage of review. The applicant should provide detailed information about these items at the Recommendation stage of review.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board discussed the amount and location of the proposed retaining walls. The walls are shown as concrete and are located throughout the site, including the play areas, basketball area, and retaining walls at the south and east property lines. The Board was concerned about the amount of sound reflection that could be generated by the concrete walls and hard surface siding on the building walls.

The Board recommended a condition to design the materials of the retaining walls, patios, and vertical wall surfaces to reduce sound reflection. Possible methods could include gabion walls, wood siding, articulation of siding and wall materials, pervious patio

surfaces, and landscaping. The proposed development meets this Guideline, subject to the conditions listed below.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the context of nearby building entry design in relation to the proposed entry to this site. The Board noted that nearby residential design incorporates some front setback with a gradual transition to the front door (stairs, porch, etc.). Nearby “urban” development usually includes a strong street wall adjacent to the sidewalk, with a high degree of glazing and an entry directly from the sidewalk.

The Board explained that the proposed entry point is set back too far from the street, in combination with a strong street wall. The entry isn’t obvious and the street façade doesn’t create an active urban street front. The proposed design should be more wholly residential in feel (clearly identifiable entry, with a front façade setback and less street front glazing), or more urban in feel (minimal front setback with high degree of glazing and entry directly from the sidewalk).

If the applicant chooses the residential street front design, the entry should be clearly identifiable from the street. Possible techniques to enhance the entry point include combining the surface with the school entry path for a wider ‘entry court,’ special paving, landscaping, and vertical architectural gateway elements.

The Board directed the applicant to design a front façade and entry that relates to both the character of the overall design, and the context of nearby development.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board expressed appreciation for the development of the street facing façade in context with nearby residential structures and the entry location in the center of the front façade. However, the Board felt that the design of the two-story entry bay was inconsistent with the design of nearby residential entries and the design concept of the proposed development.

The Board recommended a condition to redesign the entry element to clearly express the break between the two three-story buildings. The two-story entry bay should be simply designed, utilize design cues from the two three-story buildings, and create a more welcoming ‘front door’ appearance.

Possible methods to achieve this result could include a two-story ‘gate’ element similar to the courtyard entry gate to the north, redesign of the two-story entry bay to express a

simple two-story volume with a shed roof or gabled roof and awning, and a centrally located door with larger windows to either side.

The proposed development meets this Guideline, subject to the conditions listed below.

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

Guidance and recommendation reflect comments in response to Guideline A-2. The proposed development meets this Guideline, subject to the conditions listed below.

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.

In addition to the comments in response to Guideline A-2, the Board directed the applicant to carefully design the separation between the two buildings, where that separation will be visible from the street front. This design should unify the two buildings and enhance the street facing façade. Possible solutions could include a wall connecting the two buildings, the stairs as an architectural expression, or a green wall.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board recommended a condition as described in response to Guideline A-2. The proposed development meets this Guideline, subject to the conditions listed below.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board described this as the largest challenge for the project. The Board noted that an overall design concept is needed to unify the residential open spaces for the proposal, including the interior space, the east 'backyard', the NE 'outdoor classroom,' and the entry court between First Place School and the proposed new building entry. The outdoor spaces should accommodate the building program and promote an overall unified open space design concept.

The Board was concerned with the character of the space between the two buildings. This space requires careful design to maximize light and air, visually integrate the external stair and walkways, and create human scale in the interior building facades. The applicant should provide shadow studies, floor plans demonstrating the relationship of units to the courtyard, and interior elevation drawings at the Recommendation stage of review.

The Board was also concerned with the narrow corridors for the proposed north building entry and the First Place School entry, in relation to the northeast outdoor classroom area. These areas should be combined to create the greatest usability and visibility for all users.

The Board further advised the applicant to examine how the eastern 'backyard' area for the apartments will serve the building program, given the location of any community room, main entry, etc. One possibility is to combine this space with the outdoor classroom space.

The Board directed the applicant to demonstrate how the green roof relates to the open space program as well.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board was satisfied with how the residential open space will allow for clear sight lines and usable open space shared between the residents and the private school. The Board was concerned about the potential for reflected sounds from the concrete retaining walls, concrete patios, and hard surface siding, and recommended a condition as described in response to Guideline A-1.

The Board noted that the retaining walls on the south and east sides of the site will be very visible to residents to the south and east. The Board recommended a condition to design the retaining walls at the south and east property lines to present a residential scale to the adjacent development.

The lighting plan didn't include fixture information at the Recommendation meeting. The Board recommended a condition to use consistently design light fixtures, and locate fixtures to follow ramps and pedestrian circulation.

The Board also discussed the pedestrian path to the electrical boxes on the south side of the development. The Board recommended a condition to change the appearance of this path to discourage pedestrians from using this area, which is only for utility and maintenance personnel. The path could be crushed rock, stepping stones, or some other material. The Board recommended that a gate should be added at the sidewalk to further discourage use of that area and enhance safety at the edges of the site.

The proposed development meets this Guideline, subject to the conditions listed below.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board directed the applicant to work with Seattle Department of Transportation to see if it might be possible to place the ADA accessible stall in the on-street parking, rather than create a curb cut for one parking stall on site.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board approved of the removal of the parking space from the site. The applicant noted potential plans to ask Seattle Department of Transportation for an on-street ADA parking space designation, following construction of the development. The proposed development meets this Guideline.

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.**

Guidance and recommendation reflect comments in response to Guidelines A-2 and C-2. The proposed development meets this Guideline, subject to the conditions listed below.

- 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 facade walls.**

Guidance and recommendation reflect comments in response to Guidelines A-1, A-2, and A-7, as related to the design of the vertical surfaces on site and the two-story entry bay.

The Board also recommended a condition to use color to reinforce the building volumes and overall design concept, and relate to the context of nearby residential buildings.

The proposed development meets this Guideline, subject to the conditions listed below.

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

Guidance and recommendation reflect comments in response to Guidelines A-2 and A-7. The proposed development meets this Guideline, subject to the conditions listed below.

- 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.**

Guidance and recommendation reflect comments in response to Guidelines A-1, A-2, and A-7. The proposed development meets this Guideline, subject to the conditions listed below.

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.**

Guidance and recommendation reflect comments in response to Guidelines A-1, A-2, and A-7. The proposed development meets this Guideline, subject to the conditions listed below.

- D-3 Retaining Walls. Retaining walls near a public sidewalk that extend higher than eye level should be avoided where possible. Where higher retaining walls are unavoidable, they should be designed to reduce their impact on pedestrian comfort and to increase the visual interest along the streetscapes.**

Guidance and recommendation reflect comments in response to Guidelines A-1 and A-7. The proposed development meets this Guideline, subject to the conditions listed below.

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

Early Design Guidance comments reflected those in response to Guideline A-1, A-2, A-6, and A-7. The Board noted that 'eyes on the street,' a clearly identifiable entry, and clear sight lines will add to safety and security for residents. Multiple narrow paths and open spaces with retaining walls, blind corners, and lack of natural light will create challenges for safety and security.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board recommended conditions related to the entry design, as discussed in response to Guideline A-2. The Board also recommended adding a gate at the south electrical box path and adding appropriate lighting, as discussed in response to Guideline A-7. The proposed development meets this Guideline, subject to the conditions listed below.

E. Landscaping

- 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.**

Guidance and recommendation reflect comments in response to Guidelines A-1 and A-7. The proposed development meets this Guideline, subject to the conditions listed below.

- E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions. The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.**

Guidance and recommendation reflect comments in response to Guidelines A-1 and A-7. The proposed development meets this Guideline, subject to the conditions listed below.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

No development standard departures were requested.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation summarized below was based on the design review packet dated September 28, 2011, and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the September 28, 2011 Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and initial recommendation conditions, and reviewing the plans and renderings, the five Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design. The Board recommended the following CONDITIONS (Authority referred in the letter and number in parenthesis):

1. The applicant shall modify the materials of the retaining walls, patios, and vertical wall surfaces to reduce sound reflection. (A-1, A-7, C-4, D-1, D-3, E-2, E-3)
2. The retaining walls at the south and east property lines shall be designed to present a residential scale to the adjacent development. (A-1, C-1, C-2)
3. The applicant shall redesign the entry element to clearly express the break between the two three-story buildings, should be simply designed, and create a more welcoming 'front door' appearance. (A-2, A-3, A-6, C-2, C-3, C-4, D-1, D-7)
4. The south path to the electrical boxes shall be surfaced in a material to discourage casual pedestrian use, and a gate shall be added close to the sidewalk to prevent casual pedestrian use of that area. (A-7, D-7, E-2)

5. The applicant shall demonstrate that the proposed color palette reinforces the building volumes and overall design concept, and relate to the context of nearby residential buildings. (C-1, C-2)
6. The applicant shall demonstrate use of consistently designed light fixtures, and shall locate fixtures to follow ramps and pedestrian circulation. (A-7, C-4, D-7)