

City of Seattle

Mike McGinn, Mayor

Department Planning and Development

D.M. Sugimura, Director

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## **EARLY DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES**

### **Administrative Design Review**

**June 15, 2010**

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#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Project Number: 3011162

Address: 3904 South Edmunds Street

Applicant: Philip Christofides

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION and AREA DEVELOPMENT:**

The site is located at the corner of 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and South Edmunds Street on the northeast corner. The lot is about 6000 square feet in a Lowrise 3 (L3) zone. There is an alley in the block, but it is open at one end only. The alley right of way next to the subject site is not open to 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and SDOT does not intend to open it to 39<sup>th</sup>. Previous grading activity has created a small slope at the edge of the property on 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue South. Existing buildings on the site are proposed to be demolished. The site is located across 39<sup>th</sup> from the Columbia City Historic District. There is a change of zone at the east property line. The properties to the east are zoned single family 5000 (SF 5000). There are several multifamily developments to the north and south along 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue south. The Lowrise zone is only one parcel deep along the east edge of 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue South.

#### **ARCHITECT'S PROPOSAL:**

The applicant proposes to build two to three story ground related townhouse style residential dwelling units in one or two structures. The parking is located underground in two schemes with access off of 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and surface parking with alley access in a third scheme.

Scheme A is a design alternative with 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue South parking area access, one building with four units. The proposed building is elevated from 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue South in that there is a tall retaining wall, approximately 12-16 feet at the sidewalk edge. Open space is split into areas east and west of the building. Underground parking is proposed to be accessed from 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue South. The building faces 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue South.

Scheme B splits 5 units into two townhouse buildings. One building faces South Edmunds Street and the other faces 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue South. The buildings are proposed to be atop a retaining wall as per Scheme A. Open space is split into areas east and west of the building. Underground parking is proposed to be accessed from 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue South.

Scheme C varies from the first two schemes in several ways. The parking is accessed from the alley and is surface parking along the east property edge. There is one building that has been pushed down to the sidewalk level of 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue South. The building only faces 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and the proposal shows a garden/landscaping treatment on South Edmunds Street. There are six units proposed in this scheme. Open space is provided along 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue South at grade and at the roof level. The building is sited farthest from the east property line in this scheme.

This Administrative Design Review process is an option to an applicant for new multifamily structures if the structure would not exceed SEPA thresholds. The purpose and intent is to provide flexibility in the application of development standards to better meet the intent of the priority guidelines as established by City policy. See SMC 23.41.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Five public comments were received during the early design guidance comment period. Several comments discussed needed improvements for the alley. One mentioned on street parking preferences. One letter mentioned the height of the project and the shading and view blockage it would cause to neighboring sites. The letter mentioned that if parking is along the east property line then that would greatly impact the single family residence next door. One letter mentioned that scheme C massing seems very good because the building faces onto 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, parking is well located and parking is located away from the street. The same letter mentions that the treatment of the landscaping walls on South Edmunds Street should be studied with preference for high quality materials.

## **DISCUSSION**

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the planner has provided the siting and design guidance described below and identified by letter and number those siting and design guidelines found in the City of Seattle's "*Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily & Commercial Buildings*" of highest priority to this project.

## **DESIGN GUIDELINES**

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

#### ***A-5 Respect for Adjacent sites***

***Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their site to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings***

## ***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 project should minimize the impact of the building and parking on neighboring sites, particularly the adjoining site to the east. There should be intervening landscaping and screening to minimize noise, odors and dust. Edge conditions should be well-designed to increase the single family sense of privacy. Access to underground parking from 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue South should be considered in scheme C as a way to better locate parking on the site while retaining a large building setback from the single family zone edge.

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

### ***B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale***

***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.***

The project should explore Scheme C in that it begins to approach a sensitive transition to the adjoining, less intensive zone, the single family 5000 zone. The buildings in Scheme C are pushed to the sidewalk on 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and should be kept as low in height as possible. Shading on the neighboring property should be kept to a minimum. The development should continue design development with Scheme C where all units face 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and the South Edmunds portion of the site is landscaped with no units facing South Edmunds.

## ***C Architectural Elements and Materials***

### ***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.***

### ***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.***

### ***C-5 Structured Parking Entrances***

***The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.***

Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Exterior finish materials should be of high quality and reflect area wide materials and uses. Parking entrances should be minimized.

## ***D Pedestrian Environment***

### ***D-3 Retaining Walls***

***Retaining walls near a public sidewalk that extend higher than eye level should be avoided where possible.***

### ***D-7 Pedestrian Safety***

***Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.***

Scheme C does more to meet guideline D-3 and should be explored more as no retaining wall is a good idea for this site. Pedestrian safety along both street frontages should be carefully considered.

## ***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.***

### ***E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or site***

***Landscaping, including living plants, special pavement, trellises, screenwalls, planters, site furniture and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.***

### ***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.***

Full and striving landscaping should be designed for all areas of this proposal. Edible landscaping and native landscaping should be integral to the design concept. Screening and fencing to buffer the neighboring properties should be well-designed for noise, odor, and dust mitigation and should recognize plants as acoustically transparent, yet useful for a sense of privacy.

Departures are contemplated for these design alternatives. Possible departures may be structure depth and building setbacks, and/ or open space quantity, size and location. Scheme C is the departments' preferred scheme with further study on the parking access and location. The parking access and location should be carefully studied for workability and conversations with SDOT preferences for alley treatment should be considered.

Please provide colored elevations in the MUP package submittal.

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