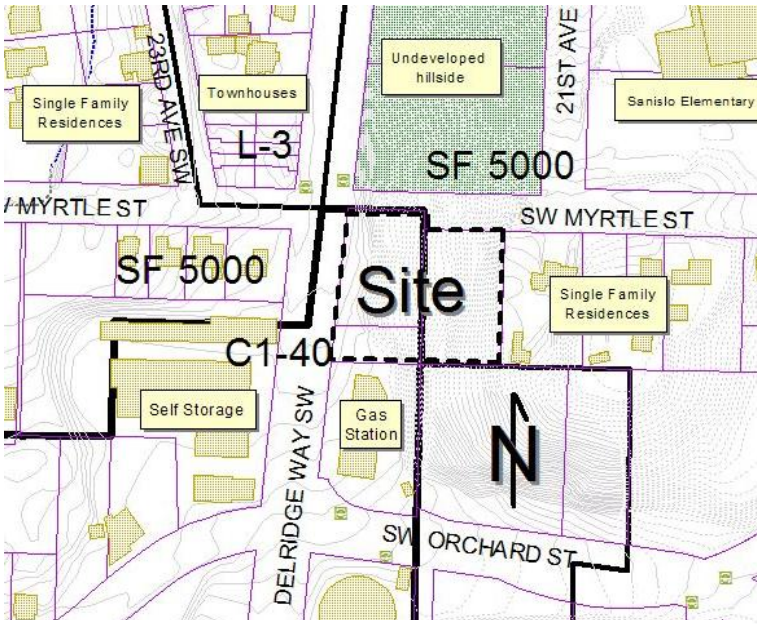
EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE PRIORITIES
OF THE
SOUTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Meeting Date: August 12, 2010
Report Date: August 26, 2010

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number:	**3011255**
Address:	**7100 Delridge Way SW**
Applicant:	**Warren Pollock for Su Development**
Board members present:	**Christie Coxley, Chair** **Myer Harrell** **Brandon Nicholson** **Norma Tompkins**
Board members absent	**Robin Murphy (excused)**
DPD staff present:	**Shelley Bolser, Senior Land Use Planner**

SITE & VICINITY

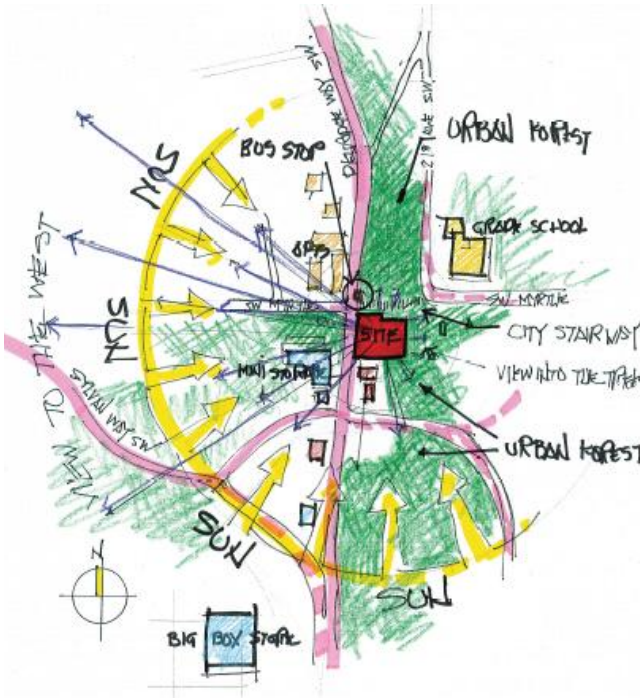


For illustrative purposes only

The approximately 44,138 square foot site is located on the southeast corner of Delridge Way SW and the unopened right of way SW Myrtle St. SW Myrtle St right of way borders the north property lines of the site and is improved with a public staircase connecting Delridge Way SW with 21st Ave SW at the top of the hill.

The site is split zoned with the western portion zoned Commercial with a 40' height limit (C1-40) and the uphill eastern portion zoned Single Family (SF 5000). Commercial zoning continues to the south and southwest, and Single Family zoning continues to the north, east, and further to the west. Lowrise Multifamily (L-2 and L-3) zones are located to the southeast and northwest.

The site is undeveloped and includes many trees and some steep slope and potential slide environmentally critical areas. Nearby uses include single family residential uphill from the site, an elementary school uphill east of the site, a gas station to the south, self-storage to the west, and townhouses to the northwest. Some commercial including big-box type retail is located further to the southwest. Most surrounding development is one to three stories tall.



Applicant's context analysis

Bus stops are located on Delridge Way SW and SW Orchard St, with one bus stop located just north of the subject property. Delridge Way SW is developed with sidewalks in this area. Many of the nearby streets do not include sidewalks, curb, or gutter.
Off-street parking is predominantly in private surface parking areas. There are no alleys adjacent to the site.

The site is not located inside any neighborhood specific design review guidelines area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes to develop the site with a mixed-use residential and commercial building, underground parking, and three to four single family residences.

The mixed-use building would include approximately 61 apartments, 77 below grade parking stalls, and 1,750 square feet of commercial space.

The proposal includes one curb cut at Delridge Way SW. An internal courtyard with bridges would connect the proposed single family residences to the mixed-use building for access to parking below.

BACKGROUND

Su Development builds and operates rental housing with the intent to develop and manage the proposal at this site.

In the urban design analysis, the applicant looked at the Delridge Neighborhood Plan designating this area as a "South Node" for development, the zone edge between Commercial and Single Family Residential, the environmentally critical areas on the site, and the urban forest on the site. The applicant provided DPD with an arborist report prior to the EDG meeting that indicated exceptional trees and groves of trees. The applicant also received feedback from DPD regarding the specific location of the steep slope environmentally critical areas. The applicant explained that the intent is to protect these areas and the proposed site plan responds to that information.

The applicant discussed three possible design concepts at the Early Design Guidance meeting. All of the concepts included the same proposed curb cut locations, most of the building mass at or near the west property line, pedestrian connections to the public staircase at SW Myrtle St, bus stop enhancements at Delridge Way SW, and detached single family residences with internal site connections to the larger building.

Concept B a large block-like massing with a double loaded corridor, centrally located on the commercial portion of the site. The west façade would be oriented at an angle to the property line, reflecting the context of nearby development and building orientation to Delridge Way SW. The west façade could include a checkerboard pattern of windows, walls, and recessed decks to reduce the appearance of mass. Live-work units would be located at the street level at Delridge Way SW. Four single family residences would be located on the single family zoned portion of the site, with pedestrian connections to the larger building.

Concept C would include a similar double loaded corridor and a west façade placed at an angle to Delridge Way SW. Live-work units would again be located at street level. The façade treatment would be distinct for the residential building and the live-work units to draw attention to the different uses and scale. The east portion of the building would include a courtyard with a bridge to access the four single family houses proposed immediately to the east.

Concept A is the applicant preferred option and includes a U-shaped mass for the mixed-use building, with open space in the center. Three single family residences would border the east side of the open space and would be connected to the larger building via open bridge walkways. The larger building would be a story lower than options B and C, and the west façade would be located at the west property line. Retail would be provided at the street level on Delridge Way SW.

The applicant explained that the large opening at the second and third floors would allow visual connection from the street through to the internal courtyard and would allow the front facing units to see into the courtyard. The intent is to provide a high degree of transparency at the street level near the retail and residential entries. The materials would include a neutral color for north-south oriented walls, and an intense color for east-west oriented walls (balconies, opening, etc) to provide visual interest as a person moves past the building.

The single family detached residences would respond to the different context uphill from the site, which is smaller scale residential with more pedestrian activity and an urban forest setting. The lower height of the west building, transitioning to single family residences bordering the urban forest would provide a transition of scale from Delridge Way SW up to residences to the east. The transition and lower height, combined with tree preservation in the uphill portion of the site, would make the west building less visible to residences uphill from the site.

The applicant summarized the scale of proposed development related to existing context by showing elevation drawings of the proposed development in scale with the adjacent gas station and the nearby Home Depot building. The applicant noted that the existing commercial context doesn’t offer much response to the neighborhood plan desire for a ‘node’ at this location, and hopefully the proposed development could create a new context for future development.

BOARD QUESTIONS

The Board had the following questions, with responses from the applicant:

- How much grading would be necessary to achieve the parking garage?
    - The intent is to dig straight back from the sidewalk level for the first level of parking, then step up to the second level of parking. This would be done to avoid a large retaining wall at the back of the commercially zoned property.
- What would the north-facing wall look like at the public staircase?
    - A setback of 25' from the staircase is proposed at the north façade
    - Windows from the units would face north, and pedestrian connections would be proposed between the site and the staircase
    - Lighting would be designed to reduce glare and enhance safety at the staircase
- Longfellow Creek is nearby, to the west. Has the applicant looked at how this project might affect that area in relation to runoff, etc.?
    - The applicant is aware of the creek, but it's separated by Delridge Way SW from the creek, so runoff may not reach the creek.
- It appears there are some large power poles and lines adjacent to the site. Has the applicant discussed how this might impact the proposal with Seattle City Light?
    - Yes, Seattle City Light has indicated that the proposed development would meet any power pole/line setback requirements (no rooftop deck would be allowed, etc.)
- What right of way improvements are proposed adjacent to Delridge Way SW?
    - Seattle Department of Transportation has indicated that they don't wish to have the curb relocated, which restricts the area left between the curb and property line for right of way improvements. The applicant intends to replace the existing sidewalk, and it's possible there might be a new planting strip added.
- Where would the façade location be in relation to the sidewalk?
    - The façade would be set a couple of feet back from the edge of the sidewalk.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Five members of the public signed in at the Early Design Guidance meeting. The following comments were offered:

- Appreciation for the development located as far west on the site as possible, to reduce the noise and visual impacts to the residences uphill from the site
- Appreciation for the new development and the design response to the neighborhood
- Appreciation for the developer in their design and operation of other projects around the Puget Sound area
- Maximum number of trees should be retained to reduce noise and air pollution
- The site should be activated at the perimeters, with open sight lines at the sidewalk
- The SW Myrtle staircase should be activated, well lit, and safe
- What does the south façade look like for the preferred option?
    - Apartment windows facing south, and a blank wall at the lower level adjacent to the gas station
- Concern for slope stability at this site
- The west façade should be setback from the street a little, with usable retail at the street level

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.* All guidelines apply to the project, and the following list is those the Board identified as having the highest priority to this project.

"Hot Button Issues" are items initially discussed by the Board and include items of top importance for the design. For this project, the Board determined the hot button issue was:

1. **Green Factor Departure.** The applicant should first try to meet the Green Factor on the Commercially-zoned site. If the departure request continues to Recommendation stage, the applicant should demonstrate how they have attempted to meet the requirement, and how the proposed design better meets the intent of the Design Review Guidelines.
    - Consider a vegetated roof to both meet Green Factor and enhance the view for the proposed single family residences uphill of the proposed mixed-use building.

The applicant should address all priority guidelines and Board guidance below during the next stages of design review.

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.

The Board expressed appreciation for the bridge connecting the proposed mixed-use and single family structures and the response to grade changes. The applicant should continue with the preferred design concept and focus on opportunities provided by the changes in grade, with attention to retaining wall treatment.

The preferred option massing was supported by the Board in relation to height, orientation of the west façade to the property line, the internal courtyard, and the large opening in the building between the courtyard and the street.

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

The proposed design should enhance physical and visual connections to the staircase at SW Myrtle St right of way and the sidewalk at Delridge Way SW. The proposed opening in the building at the west façade should be enhanced to create visual interest and maximize visual connections. The proposed physical connections to SW Myrtle St staircase should be designed for safety and pedestrian comfort.

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

The internal courtyard may include large retaining walls as a result of grading for the parking garage. The applicant should create a design for these walls that could include visual interest in the retaining wall material, and/or a softening of the wall with vegetation.

B. Height, Bulk and Scale

B-1 **<u>Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility</u>. 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 proposed design should respond to the context of transitions along Delridge Way SW. North of the subject property the lots are zoned Single Family 5000 and are owned by the Seattle Parks Department so are unlikely to be developed. South of the site is a gas station and other sparse commercial development. The applicant has done a good job of responding to the east-west transition and context, and should also respond to this north-south transition and context.

The building mass could also be re-organized slightly to provide additional solar exposure for the proposed internal courtyard. The applicant should consider methods to reduce building mass at the upper level of the south façade to allow additional light into the courtyard.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

C-2 **<u>Architectural Concept and Consistency</u>. 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.**

The Board expressed appreciation for the direction of the design and the preferred concept modulation and use of color to highlight visual interest in the west façade. The Board noted that this will continue to be an important element of the design and additional information will be required at the Design Recommendation stage.

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

C-4 **<u>Exterior Finish Materials</u>. 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 related to C-3 and C-4: The applicant should focus on creating human scale at the street level. This can be enhanced with glazing and architectural details. Additional information should be provided at the Design Recommendation stage.

D. Pedestrian Environment

D-1 **<u>Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances</u>. 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.**

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

Guidance related to D-1 and D-7: Overhead weather protection should be included at the bus waiting area, retail entry and residential entry. This can be partially achieved with building overhangs.

Lighting for security and safety should be included at the north façade adjacent to the SW Myrtle St staircase. Consider working with nearby residents and the elementary school (PTA, etc) to determine the need for safety and design strategies to meet the need. Work with SDOT for specific lighting strategies for the public right of way.

D-2 **<u>Blank Walls</u>. 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.**

There may be some proposed blank wall areas at the north and south facades and at the internal courtyard. The applicant should work to minimize these areas, mitigate blank walls with materials that lend visual interest and/or soften the walls with landscaping. More information is needed about this at the Design Recommendation stage.

D-5 **<u>Visual Impacts of Parking Structures</u>. The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape. Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.**

In addition to guidance provided in response to guidelines A-7 and D-2, the applicant should indicate how the proposed design will respond to the bus stop at the northwest area. The parking levels are at or below grade, and the walls of the parking structure may be visible at the bus stop and the north façade. More information is needed about this at the Design Recommendation stage.

D-11 **<u>Commercial Transparency</u>. 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.**

Comments reflect guidance in response to Guidelines C-3 and C-4.

E. Landscaping

E-3 <u>Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions</u>. 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.

The applicant should work to meet the Green Factor requirements on the Commercially zoned site. The site is adjacent to two public right of ways, and landscaping in the public right of way can be used to achieve Green Factor. Rooftop landscaping could also work to achieve Green Factor and create a better view for uphill residences (proposed and existing).

Any trees that are proposed for the internal courtyard should be planted in soil that is deep enough to support the proposed species of tree. There is an opportunity to plant additional trees between the proposed single family residences and other areas where there is no structure proposed below the soil.

A detailed landscape plan is needed at the Design Recommendation stage for review of this item.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

SMC Reference	Requirement	Anticipated Departure	Applicant Rationale	Board Guidance
23.47A.014 Setback for upper level residential, adjacent to a residential zone	A setback is required along any rear or side lot line that abuts a lot in a residential zone: Ten feet for portions of structures above 13 feet in height to a maximum of 65 feet.	Reduce the 10' required setback along the east property line to zero.	Both the commercial lot and single family lot are part of the proposed development and would be linked by internal connections	The Board will continue to evaluate the proposed departure, provided the applicant can demonstrate that the departure would better meet the intent of the adopted design guidelines.
23.47A.016 Landscaping and Screening standards; Green Factor	The proposed development on the commercially zoned property shall achieve a Green Factor of at least 0.30	Amount of departure unclear at this time. The applicant wishes to use tree preservation on the single family zoned portion of the site to meet Green Factor requirements for the commercially zoned portion of the site.	Both the commercial lot and single family lot are part of the proposed development. The single family zoned portion doesn't have a Green Factor requirement, but most of the tree retention would occur on that lot.	See response to Guideline E-3; The Board will continue to evaluate the proposed departure, provided the applicant can demonstrate that the departure would better meet the intent of the adopted design guidelines.

SUMMARY

The Board recommended that the applicant proceed to MUP application stage and return for a Design Recommendation meeting with the information listed below.

NEXT STEPS

MUP Application:

1. Submit application for Master Use Permit (MUP) application. Appointments for MUP intake may be made by calling (206) 684-8850. Please contact Land Use Planner Shelley Bolser at (206) 733-9067 or shelley.bolser@seattle.gov when you have scheduled your MUP intake appointment.
2. A traffic study or memo disclosing trip estimates may be required as part of the next phase of the MUP process.
3. Revised arborist report, per correction letter sent by Shelley Bolser (dated August 17, 2010)
4. Please include a written response to the guidance provided in this EDG, as noted in CAM 238, Attachment B. Plan on embedding four 11x17 colored and shadowed elevations, landscape and right-of-way improvement plans into the front of the MUP plan set (4 per sheet). Label all sheets for design review and provide a table of contents at the front of the plan set. CAM 238 may be accessed at http://web1.seattle.gov/DPD/CAMs/CamDetail.aspx?cn=238.
5. Landscaping plan should include size, species, and location, and should clearly indicate which trees are proposed for removal and retention, and identification of any exceptional trees or groves of trees
6. Plans of all significant floor levels including below grade parking. Include scale and north arrow.
7. Graphics of the four facades, rendered to provide a sense of the depth of proposed façade including design, colors, and materials
8. Graphics demonstrating detail of the street level facades, including canopies, entrances, materials, colors, etc.
9. Building sections showing all proposed development on site and outline of adjacent structures (to the east and south).

Recommendation Meeting:

Include the following items in your design recommendation meeting packet:

1. Summary of the arborist report and determination from DPD
    a. Landscaping plan should clearly indicate which trees are proposed for removal and retention, and identification of any exceptional trees or groves of trees
2. Graphics demonstrating the proposed development in context with existing development (perspectives, elevations, and site plan)
3. Perspective sketches from the pedestrian view including proposed development in the context of nearby development.
4. Detailed graphics of the building top and roof level (mechanical equipment location and screening, amenity space, etc)
5. Materials and colors board (provide examples of the proposed materials on existing projects, and/or demonstrate how the materials will truly appear on the proposed project)
6. Items 4 through 9 from the list above
7. Provide an electronic copy of the recommendation packet to the Land Use Planner at the time of recommendation packet submittal. Instructions available under “Digital Submissions” at http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Applicant_s_Toolbox/default.asp