



City of Seattle

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



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012300

Address: 505 11th Ave E

Applicant: Alyssa Mehl of Nicholson Kovalchick Architects for nic|chick LLC

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, July 06, 2011

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

Board Members Absent: Clint Keithley
Lisa Picard

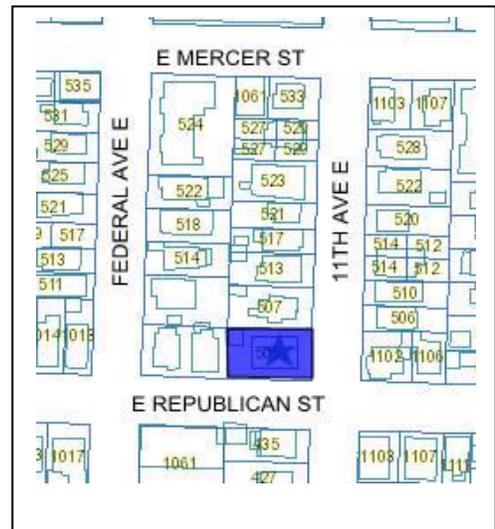
DPD Staff Present: Shelley Bolser, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Multi-family Lowrise (LR3)

Nearby Zones: (North) LR3
(South) LR3
(East) LR3
(West) LR3

Lot Area: The site is a 5,983 square foot rectangular corner lot with a slight grade change from the east down to the west.



Current Development: The existing site includes a two story multi-family apartment building and a detached garage. The primary structure was originally a single family residence, constructed in 1900.

Access: There is an existing curb cut from E. Republican Street to access the garage. The site is not adjacent to an alley.

The surrounding development includes several lowrise apartments, townhouses, and single family residences. Most of the structures are 2-3 stories tall, with some facades at 4 stories in response to the slight slopes in the area.

Surrounding Development: There are no alleys in the surrounding properties, and most of the off-street parking is accessed via curb cuts from the street. On-street parking is regulated with limited parking times and longer term parking permits for residents.

A future park is in the design phase for the lots to the west of this site. The current proposed design for the park would replace the retaining wall at the shared property line with this site, and locate a stage and public gathering area immediately west of the subject property.

ECAs: The area slopes from the east down to the west, and another slight slope from the north down to the south. There is a mapped Steep Slope Environmentally Critical Area on the west portion of this site and areas north of the site.

The site is located in the Capitol Hill Urban Center Village. This is an area of residential development between the commercial corridors at Broadway (3 blocks to the west) and 15th Avenue (5 blocks to the east). The site is located within three blocks north of the future light rail station currently under construction at E. John Street and Broadway.

Neighborhood Character: The site is located on a non-arterial street, with similar low traffic streets nearby. The streets all have sidewalks, curb, gutter, and planting strips. There is a high level of pedestrian traffic in the area, with destinations of Broadway, Volunteer Park, Cal Anderson Park, and 15th Avenue within a few blocks.

Recent Land Use Code changes adopted in December 2010 allow additional height and density in this area of LR3 zoning. There is also no longer any parking required for residential uses in this area. These changes were made in response to the Urban Village designation of the area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed development includes relocation of the existing multi-family structure on site and the addition of two four story apartment buildings on the north and west sides of the site, with below grade parking accessed from E. Republican St. The total development would include 24 units and 10 parking stalls.

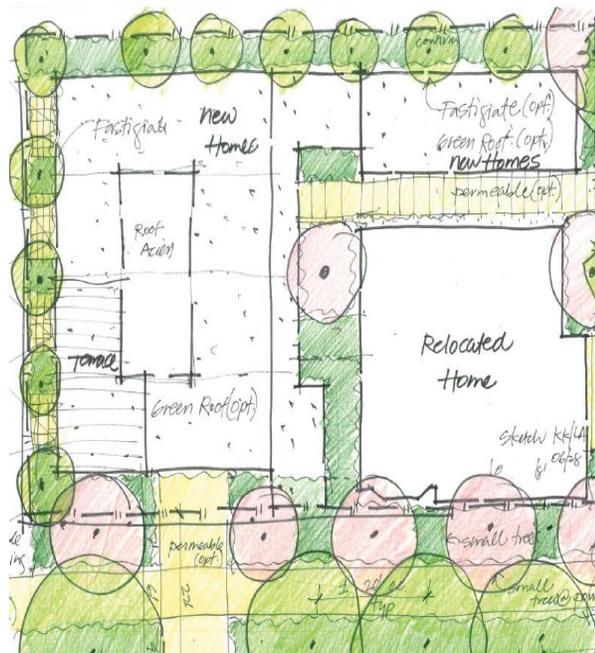
EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: July 6, 2011

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Five alternative design schemes were presented. Options 1, 2, 4, and 5 included 10 below grade parking stalls accessed from a curb cut at E. Republican Street. Options 1 and 2 proposed demolition of the existing structures and two new buildings separated by a courtyard. Options 3 through 5 proposed retaining the existing multi-family structure and adding two new buildings with courtyards between the buildings. The applicant noted that exterior walkways and stairs are proposed in order to meet sustainability standards, since common enclosed building areas consume large amounts of energy.



Anticipated Park Plan



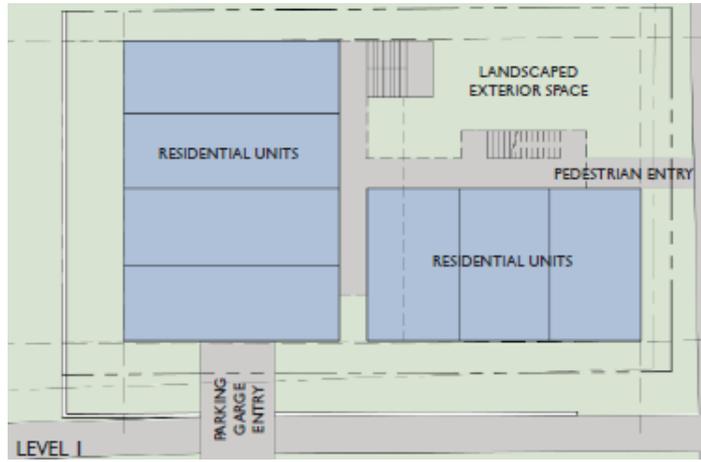
3012300 EDG Landscape Concept Plan

The applicant intends to design the landscape plans to complement the future Park to the west. The wide planting strip on E. Republican St offers an opportunity for lush planted areas, and there is a possibility that the applicant can coordinate with Parks to collect stormwater runoff for a water feature in the Park. The future Park will also include a 10-12' high retaining wall at

the shared property line with this site, which will serve as a ‘backdrop’ for the Park. The applicant presented the latest graphic available that shows the future Park plan.

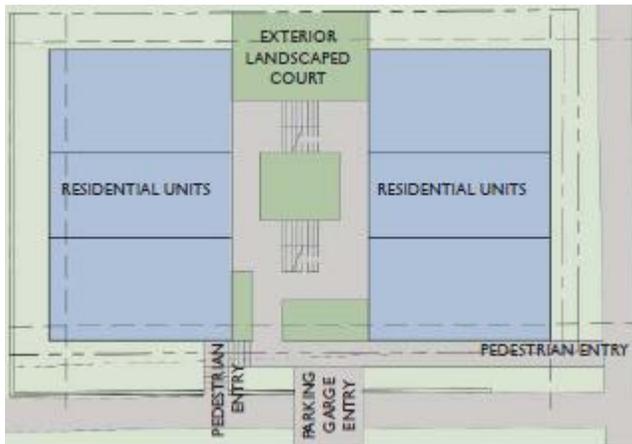
The first scheme (Option 1)

showed a zoning compliant option with 28 units in two buildings. One building was shown at the west property line and one building was shown at the south property line, with a landscaped courtyard at the northeast corner of the site. Parking access was shown near the west property line, and a pedestrian entry to the site shown at the east property line. The applicant noted that this option requires no departures from the Land Use Code requirements, it offers space between the proposed development and the residences to the north, and it provides units facing the park for “eyes on the street” and increased safety. Cons of this option include loss of the existing 1900 structure, limited modulation facing E. Republican St, and a weaker pedestrian connection from the site to E. Republican St.



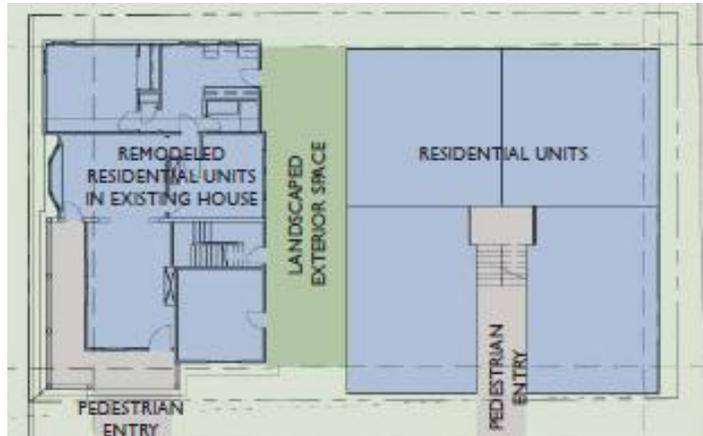
The second scheme (Option 2)

showed 24 units in three buildings. One building was shown at the west property line and one building was shown at the east property line, with a landscaped courtyard at the northeast corner of the site. Parking access was shown near the middle of the south property line, and a pedestrian entry to the site shown west of the parking access. The applicant noted that this option requires two departures from the Land Use Code requirements, to reduce the required setback from the south and west property lines. Pros included a stepped south façade to respond to grade changes

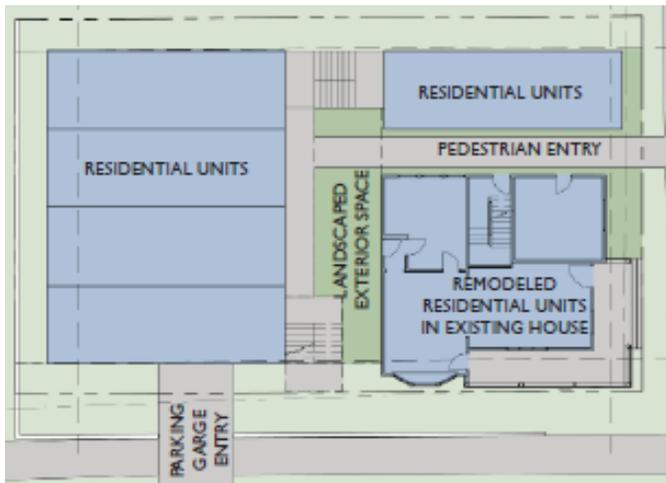


and give visual interest, a clear point of pedestrian entry, and units facing the park for “eyes on the street” and increased safety. Cons of this option included loss of the existing 1900 structure, limited modulation facing 11th Ave E, and a weaker pedestrian connection from the site to 11th Ave E.

The third scheme (Option 3) showed 20 units in two buildings. One of the buildings would be the existing structure, relocated to the west edge of the site and remodeled to include 4 apartments. The other building would be a new U-shaped structure, with the primary pedestrian entry facing E. Republican St. No parking was shown with this option. This option would require departures to reduce the required setback at the west, south, and east property lines. Pros included saving the existing 1900 structure, the front porch of the structure would face the future Park to the west, visual interest facing E. Republican St, and a strong pedestrian connection along E. Republican St. Cons included a lack of internal open space between the existing and new structures, limited building modulation facing 11th Ave E, and a weaker pedestrian connection to 11th Ave E.



The fourth scheme (Option 4) was the preferred scheme and showed 24 units in three buildings.



One of the buildings would be the existing structure, relocated to the southeast corner of the site and remodeled to include 4 apartments. A second building would include stacked flats facing the Park to the west. A third building would be stacked flats at the north property line, and connected to the second building via exterior stairs and walkways. 10 below grade parking spaces were shown with access from E. Republican St. This option would require departures to reduce the required setback at the west and east property lines, and a departure to allow more structure width and façade length at the north property line. Pros included saving the existing 1900 structure, the front porch of the structure would face the street corner, and units facing the park for “eyes on the street” and increased safety. Cons included the impacts related to placing a lot of building mass at the north property line

(shadows, bulk, scale impacts to the north).

The fifth scheme (Option 5) was presented at the EDG meeting as an additional alternative beyond what was shown in the EDG packet. This option was similar to Option 4, but with the existing structure relocated to the northeast corner and a new structure proposed at the south property line. This option would require departures to reduce the required setback at the west and east property lines, and a departure to allow more structure width and façade length at the north property line. Pros included saving the existing 1900 structure, a more gradual massing change along 11th Ave E.



from E. Republican St, and units facing the park for “eyes on the street” and increased safety. Cons included less visibility for the wraparound porch on the existing structure, and increased shadows at the interior of the site.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 24 members of the public signed the sign-in sheet at this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Opposed to the location of a four story building at the north property line, because of the rhythm of the buildings at 11th Ave E and the shadow/bulk impacts on the neighbor to the north
- Opposed to the proposed departures. The code was recently changed to allow more building in this zone and the Design Review Board should not support departures.
- Objected to the 4-story height and additional height for partially below grade parking at the west edge of the site
- Encouraged retaining the existing original structure on site and building addition that meets Land Use Code requirements
- Encouraged incorporating historic elements in the new building to respond to nearby structures
- Concerned with lack of parking
- The design should respond to the scale of the neighborhood and the Capitol Hill Neighborhood Guidelines that address height bulk and scale
- The design should meet the minimum setback at the west property line, adjacent to the future Park
- The bulk of the building at the west property line will create shadows into the park. With the mature street trees at the south and west edges of the park, the park will be in shadow most of the day.
- The number of units proposed for this size parcel is too many

- The corner location makes the street facing facades especially important at this site. Design to the scale of the neighborhood.
- 11th Avenue is more of a quiet residential street and E. Republican St is more of a pedestrian corridor. The project should respond to these conditions.
- The density is good, but too many small apartments will result in short-term neighbors. The apartments should be available and affordable for a variety of people (singles, families, etc.), with fewer units to help create a sense of community.
- Landscaping and gardens are important in this area, especially adjacent to the street. Look at nearby examples of creative gardening adjacent to the street.
- The density is good and the developer shouldn't reduce the number of units, but family-size units are a good idea.
- Would prefer that the applicant restores the existing structure but with minimal building addition, similar to the building across from Safeway at E. John St and 14th Ave E.
- Consider removing the parking from the proposal in order to reduce the height of the buildings.
- Shadow studies are needed to look at shadows cast on the Park and the properties to the north.
- Include more parking, since the on-street parking is already maximized.
- The retaining wall is shown on the applicant's property, not the Park property.
- Believes there is a moratorium on demolishing 100 year old houses.
- The existing setbacks should be maintained.
- The design is too blocky and needs architectural detail and visual interest.
- The preferred design showing additions on two sides of the existing structure looks very cramped and out of character with nearby development.
- Support for considerate design to the Park, but the bigger need is considerate design on the sides facing the neighborhood.

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.

The Neighborhood specific guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

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 discussed the mass of the proposed new buildings on site in relation to the Park to the west and the grade changes across the site. The Board noted that the grade drops down to the west, with a retaining wall at the west property line. This results in additional height and bulk at the west property line. The Land Use Code allows the below grade parking to extend 4' above grade. When combined with the topography, this results in the appearance of additional height and bulk at the west edge and southwest corner.

The Board directed the applicant to consider removing the below grade parking, with the intent of reducing the appearance of height and bulk at the west edge and southwest corner.

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. Examples include lots on Broadway that extend to streets with residential character, such as Nagle Place or 10th or Harvard Avenues East. While a design with a commercial character is appropriate along Broadway, compatibility with residential character should be emphasized along the other streets.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted the pattern of existing single family and multi-family structures along 11th Ave E. This pattern includes substantial side yard areas, compared with the proposed massing of the preferred alternative. The pattern results in a regular rhythm of 2-3 story modulated masses facing 11th Ave E, with spacing between the building masses.

The Board directed the applicant to modify the design to reflect this rhythm along 11th Ave E. A departure from the east property line setback might be justifiable, but the design should include large massing breaks at the north and south property lines. One way to achieve this is to place the existing structure at the east property line, but not add new structures to the north or south of it. It is also possible to achieve this by demolishing the existing structures and building new structures to respond to this street pattern.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board expressed concern with the departures proposed at the north and west property lines, and the building mass proposed at the north property line. The Board stated that the proposal should be modified to meet Land Use Code requirements at the west and north property lines. Departures from the internal setbacks between buildings, the east property line setback, and the south property line setback could be considered.

The design of the proposed development should respond to the activities anticipated at the Park and the needs for privacy for residents to the north.

The proposed building at the north property line also disrupts the pattern of streetscape at 11th Ave E, as described in the response to A-2 above.

The applicant should modify the proposed design to meet this guidance, and provide shadow studies of the proposed massing shadows on the Park and the property to the north.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that the design of the spaces between the buildings on site will need to relate to the design of the buildings, the design concept for the overall site, and the needs of the residents. These areas should be carefully designed, especially because of the potential for lack of light and air from exterior stairs and walkways. If these spaces are smaller than shown in the preferred option, it would be acceptable as long as the open spaces include a quality design.

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.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- **Preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment in residential and commercial areas by providing for continuous sidewalks that are unencumbered by parked vehicles and are minimally broken within a block by vehicular access.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the proposed parking access location at E. Republican St. The Board was supportive of this location for access, if the parking remains part of the proposal. If provided, the appearance of parking access should be minimized, and the access point should be designed to enhance pedestrian safety.

B. Height, Bulk and Scale

B-1 Height, Bulk, and 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted the concerns listed in response to Guidelines A-1, A-2, and A-5. The applicant should consider dropping the building one story, possibly by removing below grade parking. The design of the building at the west property line should also include upper story setbacks to maximize light and air to the Park. The proposed height, bulk, and scale should respond to the context of the Park, the 11th Ave E. streetscape, and the grade changes on site.

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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the pattern of development on 11th Ave E., as described in response to Guideline A-2.

The Board noted that preservation of the original 1900 structure may result in a design that responds better to neighborhood context. The Board also noted that it may be beneficial to preserve only the original 1900 structure, and not the later building additions or garage. However, Board members explained they would defer to any comments from Department of Neighborhoods about the historic relevance of the structures on site.

The Board responded to the proposed modern design of the preliminary sketches and noted that modernism can fit with historic patterns of development, but the design would have to reflect reference to nearby development. Techniques to mesh modernism with historic context include attention to building proportion, massing, materials, sunshades, fenestration, and decks/balconies.

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.**

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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board directed the applicant to develop a design that provides a cohesive design concept for the entire site. If the applicant retains the existing structure on site, this should be done through open space design and using building design techniques to tie the structures visually. Potential techniques are listed in response to Guideline C-1.

The proposed design concept should also respond to the Park design through open space design, relating the proposed design to the anticipated Park activities, etc. The design

concept should also respond to the solar orientation of the proposed building, possibly with sunshades on the west and south facades. The design should also respond to the needs of privacy for future residents and neighboring properties, by considering window placement, shading/screening techniques, and placement of open spaces.

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Incorporate building entry treatments that are arched or framed in a manner that welcomes people and protects them from the elements and emphasizes the building's architecture.
- Improve and support pedestrian-orientation by using components such as: non-reflective storefront windows and transoms; pedestrian-scaled awnings; architectural detailing on the first floor; and detailing at the roof line.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board clarified that the proposed design should incorporate human scaled treatments such as the reference to historic articulation, fenestration, façade treatments, etc.

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:

- Use wood shingles or board and batten siding on residential structures.
- Avoid wood or metal siding materials on commercial structures.
- Provide operable windows, especially on storefronts.
- Use materials that are consistent with the existing or intended neighborhood character, including brick, cast stone, architectural stone, terracotta details, and concrete that incorporates texture and color.
- 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.

Guidance reflects the comments in response to Guidelines A-7, B-1, C-1, C-2, and C-3.

D. Pedestrian Environment

- 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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board directed the applicant to provide more information about the proposed retaining wall at the west property line. The retaining wall should be designed in context with the anticipated Park uses and design, and it should provide a good transition from the Park to the proposed development.

- D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures.** 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.

Guidance reflects the comments in response to Guidelines A-1, A-8, and B-1.

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.

Guidance reflects the comments in response to Guidelines A-1, A-2, A-5, A-7, C-2, and D-3, specifically relating the landscaping to the Park design, the 11th Ave E. streetscape, and minimizing the appearance of the parking access.

- 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.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Maintain or enhance the character and aesthetic qualities of neighborhood development to provide for consistent streetscape character along a corridor.
- Supplement and complement existing mature street trees where feasible.
- Incorporate street trees in both commercial and residential environments in addition to trees onsite.
- Commercial landscape treatments that include street trees.

Guidance reflects the comments in response to Guidelines A-1, A-2, A-5, A-7, C-2, and D-3, specifically relating the landscaping to the Park design, the 11th Ave E. streetscape, minimizing the appearance of the parking access, and using the internal open space to create a cohesive site concept.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based upon the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure(s). The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the following departures were requested:

- 1. Front Setback (SMC 23.45.518.A):** The Code requires a 5' minimum front setback for apartments. The applicant proposes to provide a 4' setback at the east property line in order to relocate the existing structure on site and add new development on site.

The Board indicated that they will continue to entertain this departure, but the applicant should work to design a street front massing that responds to the nearby context of 11th Ave E. (See response to guidelines A-2, and C-1 for more detail)

- 2. Rear Setback (SMC 23.45.518.A):** The Code requires a 15' minimum rear setback for apartments with no alley. The applicant proposes a 5' rear setback at the west property line in order to relocate the existing structure on site and add new development on site.

The Board expressed concern with this proposed departure, and indicated they would be unlikely to consider a departure from the west property line, since the drop in topography to the west and the presence of the Park to the west actually suggest a reduction in height/bulk/scale at that property line. Additional setbacks beyond the minimum Land Use Code requirements would be more appropriate. (See response to guidelines A-1, A-5, and B-1 for more detail)

- 3. Façade Length (SMC 23.45.527.B):** The Code requires a maximum façade length of 65% of the lot line for facades within 15' of the lot lines listed in this code section. The applicant proposes north-facing facades that measure 76% of the north lot line.

The Board expressed concern with this proposed departure, given the pattern of massing on 11th Ave and the potential shadow and privacy impacts for the property to the north. The Board indicated they would be unlikely to consider this departure as proposed, due to the scale of the building at the north property line and how the proposed design disrupts the contextual pattern at 11th Ave E. (See response to guidelines A-2, A-5, B-1, and C-1 for more detail)

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EDG meeting, the Board recommended the project could move forwards to MUP Application in response to the guidance provided at this meeting.

The applicant has requested a second Early Design Guidance meeting in order to gain additional feedback about changes to the proposed design and departures. That meeting is currently scheduled for Wednesday, August 17th, 2011.