



## SECOND EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012337

Address: 1145 Tenth Avenue East

Applicant: Tony Fan

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, November 16, 2011

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

Board Members Absent: Lisa Picard

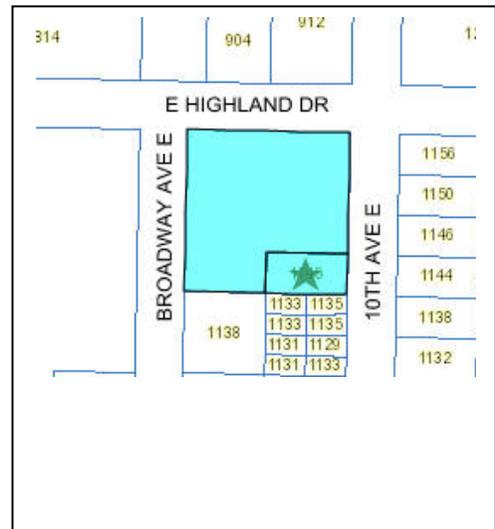
DPD Staff Present: Bruce Rips

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Lowrise Three (LR3)

Nearby Zones: North: LR3  
South: LR3  
East: LR3. Single Family 5000 begins along Federal Ave E.  
West: LR3 SF 5000 west of Harvard Ave East.

Lot Area: 40,000 square feet



Current Development: At the southeast corner sits a duplex. A parking lot occupies the majority of the property.

Access: Tenth Ave. E. on the east; East Highland Drive on the north; and Broadway East on the west.

Surrounding Development & Neighborhood Character: Apartment and condominium buildings represent the bulk of the structures to the east, west and south of the project site. Trinity Lutheran Church occupies the northeast corner of 10th Ave E. and E. Highland Dr. The City of Seattle Parks and Recreation Department controls an area of mostly steep slopes to the south and west of St. Marks Episcopal Cathedral, north of E. Highland Dr. City of Seattle’s Volunteer Park lies just over one block to the east. Predominate land use includes multifamily housing, institutions and park land. Although the site is relatively level, the terrain descends toward the west.

ECAs: No known Environmentally Critical Areas are on the site. Steep slopes and potential slide area lie to the north and west.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicant proposes a three-story structure containing 76 dwelling units, parking for 86 vehicles in a below grade garage. Vehicular access would occur on Broadway East. The existing duplex on the site would be demolished.

## **DESIGN DEVELOPMENT**

At the initial EDG meeting, the applicant presented three alternative design scenarios. Common to the schemes is vehicular approach from Broadway E. and a below-grade garage. An “L” shape design has its two wings front onto Broadway E. and E. Highland Dr. The wings form a square shaped court or open space at the site’s southeast corner facing 10<sup>th</sup> Ave E. and the adjacent townhouses to the south. The residential lobby lies along E. Highland Dr. Alternative Two, a “U” shape scheme, forms an auto court facing Broadway E. A sizeable passenger drop-off area and garage entry consumes most of the frontage on Broadway E. The complex’s perimeter walls line E. Highland Dr., 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. E. and the south property line. In plan, this scheme does not have the amounts of open space the other options offer. The bulk of the “T” shape scheme, the third option, forms a three-story wall along Broadway. A perpendicular wing extends along an east west axis toward 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. East forming two open spaces on either side of it. The primary pedestrian entrance occurs in this scheme on E. Highland similar to the first option.

Several additional design alternatives emerged at the second EDG meeting. Option 1 met the city of Seattle Land Use Code requirements. This scheme, a single rectangular structure, extends

its length along the east/west axis. This alternative preserves the trees near the north and south property lines. A cluster of trees on the east and west property lines may not be preserved in this scheme. Based on the Board's earlier request, the applicant presented Options 2A and 2B. Rising above a below grade parking garage (as all options do), these alternatives form two detached structures roughly mirroring one another with a courtyard in between. Option 2A's length extends along the north and south axis. Paired option 2B orientates the twin structures with the long axis running east and west. The third option, a reorientation of an alternative shown at the initial EDG meeting, flips the "L" shape by positioning the open space at the site's southwest corner facing Broadway E. with the long exterior walls at E. Highland and 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. E. This scheme attempts to preserve most of the trees lining the property lines with the exception of several on 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. E. Each of the options shows a curb cut and driveway on E. Highland.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Approximately forty members of the public attended the initial Early Design Guidance meeting (September 21, 2011). The following issues were raised:

### **Massing:**

Nearly everyone who spoke objected to the proposal's massiveness. No residential building in the immediate neighborhood has a footprint the size of the proposal.

- The five buildings that comprise the Harvard-Highland project are all considerably smaller than the three alternatives proposed.
- The building's size and massing should be compatible with the neighborhood. The proposed size is inappropriate.
- The three alternatives are three times the size of residential buildings in the vicinity.
- The proposal should have four buildings with a great internal courtyard.
- The buildings should set back at the third floor.
- Screen the mechanical equipment as residents of taller buildings in the area will see it.
- A solid unbroken wall on 10<sup>th</sup> Ave E. is undesirable.
- The structure will block light to surrounding homes.
- Massive, long walls don't fit the neighborhood. A large wall on 10<sup>th</sup> would not be pleasant.

### **Open Space/ Landscaping**

- Site the open space on a quiet street. Focus it towards Broadway.
- Multiple open spaces are preferable.
- Break up the open space into more discrete spaces.
- Residents should want to use the open space. Having it face noisy 10<sup>th</sup> Ave E. will diminish the usability of the court.
- The fountain will not be seen by the public.
- Flip the "L-shaped" scheme to place open space on Broadway E.
- As the project evolves, the proposed 12' planted area inward of the sidewalk should be retained.

### **Access to Parking:**

There was nearly unanimous opposition to garage access on Broadway Ave. E. Speakers requested the use of either 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. E. or E. Highland Dr. as access to the parking garage.

- A thoughtful design would make access on 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. work.
- Broadway E. is the most residential and least likely for parking access.
- Create two levels of parking with access from different streets. Public parking ought to occur on 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. E. Parking for residents should occur on Highland Dr.
- Parking access on 10th Ave would be a disaster.

### **Parking**

- Don't displace on-street parking.
- Don't preclude visitor parking on-site.
- There is limited amount of on-street parking. Spill over parking is an important concern.
- Double the amount of available parking.

### **Preservation of Trees**

- There are 48 trees with diameters 6 inches or greater. Many of these trees are very large and appear more significant than what is depicted in the design review proposal.
- The proposed removal of so many trees is alarming.
- Don't remove the large maples on the northeast and southwest corners.
- The mature trees provide privacy. Save all of the trees along Broadway.

### **Character of Design**

- The proposal has too many materials. Most structures in the Harvard Belmont Historic District have just one or two materials.
- The facades should be more traditional in appearance.
- The proposed design doesn't at all equal the historic context as suggested by the architect. The materials and composition are too much of a hodge-podge.
- How does the design benefit the neighborhood?
- Due to the site's adjacency to the Harvard-Belmont Historic District, the design should be much more sympathetic.
- The building should not look like the Harvard – Highland complex. Eclectic is better. Shake up the design. Buildings designed by Gordon Walker and Ralph Anderson in the near vicinity add to the neighborhood character.
- Use Portland's Pearl District to inform the design. Add porches and townhomes to the project.
- Strive for compatible facades.

### **Departure requests:**

All of the speakers addressing the departure requests opposed an allowance to increase the structure width from 120 feet to 180 feet. The speakers stated that the departure would only serve to augment the building's massiveness.

Several speakers opposed reducing the curb cut width.

**Programming:**

- The Harvard Highland's complex houses 38 families in five buildings. The proposal is much too big and dense.

By the initial EDG meeting, DPD received approximately 67 letters concerning the proposal. A large percentage of these letters stated a similar theme: direct future residential traffic away from Broadway East and towards E. Highland Dr. where there are fewer residences along the street. The entrance to the parking garage as well as the collection of garbage and recycling should take place on 10<sup>th</sup> Ave E. or on E. Highland Dr. Many letters urged the project proponents to decrease the density, reduce the building size, increase the amount of parking spaces, preserve the large, mature trees, maintain the value of the neighboring properties by increasing the size and quality of the apartments. For those who commented on architectural design, the project should either add to the eclecticism of the neighborhood or mirror the predominant aesthetic of the Harvard Belmont neighborhood.

At the second Early Design Guidance meeting (November 16, 2011), 22 members of the public affixed their names to the sign-in sheet. Those who spoke raised the following issues:

**Massing:**

- Massing should reflect the characteristics of the neighborhood.
- Townhouses to the south (on 10<sup>th</sup> Ave.) will face a large wall.
- Set back the third story at units # 3-11 to reduce the bulk. This would provide a transition along the north and east portions of the building. (Favored by several speakers.)
- The third story setback is successful on the Harvard-Highland project.
- Reduce the structure's size.

**Structure Orientation:**

- The 90 degree change in orientation makes no sense economically or aesthetically. It doubles the number of residences on 10<sup>th</sup> Ave.
- Residents of the townhouses to the south lose natural light resulting as well in a loss of property value.
- Many others stated their preference for the new orientation of the "L" shaped scheme.

**Lobby Orientation:**

- Shift lobby to 10<sup>th</sup> Ave where unit # 8 would be. (Recommended by several people.)
- Place lobby at unit # 18 off the courtyard. This would create a grand entrance to the courtyard. (Recommended by several people.)
- Move the lobby away from Highland Dr.

**Building Appearance:**

- Don't make a copy of the Harvard-Highland project.
- Use the best quality of brick from the ground to the top of the building. Retaining walls should also be brick.

**Landscaping/Open Space:**

- Screen the roof garden from the street. Avoid the neighbors. (Recommended by several speakers.)
- Shifting the open space to the SW corner is unfair. There is the loss of natural light for those who live directly to the south off 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. The residents who live across the street on Broadway have the right of way between them and the proposed structure. Those who live due south have no open area between their units and the proposed mass.
- Preferable to have the courtyard on the southwest portion of the site. (Favored by several speakers.)

**Traffic/Parking:**

- E. Highland is a narrow street. Placing the garage on Highland would place too much traffic on the street.
- Prefers placing parking on 10<sup>th</sup> Ave.
- Traffic on 10<sup>th</sup> Ave is busy. It is too dangerous to have access there.

DPD received approximately 51 letters immediately prior to and after the second EDG meeting. Upon viewing the design review packet at the DPD web site, the authors of the earlier letters commented on the new orientation of the driveway, the extent of the massing and scale, setbacks, materials and the relationship of the courtyard to the Broadway street level. Comments both agreed and disagreed with the orientation of the “L” shaped mass (Option 3).

After the 2<sup>nd</sup> EDG meeting, many of the letters and emails conveyed a misinterpretation of the Board’s guidance. The authors had the impression that the Board preferred Option 2B, a two structure scheme. The priorities and guidance below indicates the Board’s interest in development of either Option 2B or 3. The bulk of the deliberation, however, focused on modifications to the latter option (the “L” shaped scheme) with an understanding of the applicant’s preference for Option 3. All correspondence is available for review at DPD. Some letters received opposed having open space facing Broadway preferring either placement of the open space along 10<sup>th</sup> Ave or the two building scheme.

<b>PRIORITIES &amp; BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
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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.**

The Board acknowledged that the mature trees contribute greatly to the character of the neighborhood. The architect's distribution of open space on the site should allow for the integration of existing mature trees into the design. (September 21, 2011)

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

The generous setbacks from the street with lush plantings as shown at the EDG meeting appealed to the Board. (September 21, 2011)

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

- A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites. Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.**

The Board asked for reconsideration of the proposed structure's relationship to the townhouses to the south in order to respect the proximity of the neighboring townhouses. Terracing of a portion of the structure closest to the property line represents one technique.

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

The Board conveyed its desire for open space to fulfill the following objectives: preservation of mature trees, usability for residents, an orientation that receives the most use (most likely on the southwest), provides a gesture to the neighborhood and complements or reinforces a reduced mass of the building(s). The Board clearly preferred a distribution of open space that forms a meaningful series of discrete and intimate landscaped areas rather than a large concentrated space. (September 21, 2011)

The revisions proposed at the second EDG meeting preserved most of the trees and reoriented the "L" shaped mass to place the largest amount of open space at the site's southwest corner. The Board urged continued refinement of the mass and its relationship to the open space. Reiterating a desire to have discrete and intimate open spaces along with the grander space, the Board requested that the modulation or articulation of the facades establish more clearly defined setbacks. Within these setbacks, the open spaces should possess form and purpose. These ought to occur along 10<sup>th</sup> Ave E. near the south property line, at the corner of E. Highland Dr. and 10<sup>th</sup> Ave., and near the corner of E. Highland Dr. and Broadway.

In particular the diagonal or chamfered corner at E. Highland and 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. should be reconfigured to expose the ends of the building to imply separate masses, forming a well defined open space to anchor this corner. Likewise, judicious modification of the southern portion of the structure would create a greater sense of openness between the proposal and the townhouses directly to the south. (November 16, 2011)

**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.**

Responding to clear and emphatic public opposition to a Broadway garage entrance, the Board asked the applicant to explore the implications of access on both E. Highland Dr. and Broadway E. A 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. E. curb cut received less support from the Board members; however, if the applicant can present a viable 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. ingress and egress, the Board would consider it. For the next EDG meeting, the applicant will need to provide a scheme showing access from E. Highland Dr.

The Board conveyed its openness to accepting a reduced curb cut width. (September 21, 2011)

The Board agreed with the change of location for the curb cut and garage entry to E. Highland Dr. (November 16, 2011)

**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.**

The Board noted the lack of a code compliant alternative. The omission made it difficult for the reviewers to understand how much massing ought to be placed on the site. The footprints of each of the three alternatives were considerably larger than any residential building in the immediate neighborhood. The departure request for increased structure width exacerbates the sense that the proposal appears out of scale with the neighborhood.

For the next EDG meeting, the applicant will need to provide a viable code complying alternative and alternative(s) that have the appearance of smaller buildings or multiple building reflecting the footprint of residential structures in the vicinity. The integration of the Board's guidance on open space and streetscape compatibility is critical.

The proposed setbacks and buildings should be dimensioned for the next review. (September 21, 2011)

Of the several design scenarios or options presented at the second EDG meeting, two emerged as possessing the most resonance, Option 2B, two structures above a parking garage and separate by an axial court, and Option #3 an “L” shaped scheme with the long ends of the wings facing E. Highland Dr. and 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. E. The wings of the latter structure would form a sizeable courtyard facing Broadway E. The Board found merit in both schemes if significant modifications were to occur; however, the better part of the deliberation was devoted to discussing the “L” shaped alternative.

The Board requested a more deliberate separation of the major parts of the building (Option 3) to clarify the shape of the mass and to simplify the articulation. As noted in A-7, the Board prefers the diagonal at the northeast corner reshaped to expose the ends of the two wings suggesting two separate masses. Reacting to the site plan of Option # 3 with its multiple changes of plane along the facades, the Board asked for a simpler articulation of the vertical plane yet allowing meaningful shifts in the façade at critical locations including the northeast corner, the southeast corner near the townhouses to the south and along E. Highland Dr. The Board asked that the next iteration respond to the adjacent townhouses to the south. One possible approach is to setback the upper level.

At the second EDG meeting, the Board discussed the idea of a setback at the structure’s third level along E. Highland Dr. and 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. E.; in order to evaluate its necessity, the Board would like an analysis of the proposal’s height in relationship to the neighboring structures. The Board members reserved recommending a modification to the third level until seeing further design development. (November 16, 2011)

## 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.**

Structure size, massing, the preservation of trees and the distribution of open space had the most bearing for the Board. The design should produce the same sense of intimacy that the neighborhood evokes. (September 21, 2011)

Use of a third floor setback along E. Highland and 10<sup>th</sup> Ave would depend upon the existing neighborhood content. The Board asked for an analysis of this before making a recommendation. See guidance B-1. (November 16, 2011)

- 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.**

Seek refined facades without resorting to architectural elements (i.e. cornices and lintels) that might add clutter. (November 16, 2011)

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

#### **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.**

The Board prefers a more judicious distribution of open space over the site, one that supports the desire for a more discrete building mass and provides attractive, functional and well oriented open space that complements the overall pedestrian oriented neighborhood character. (September 21, 2011)

In agreement with recommendations made during the public comment period, the Board favored placement of the lobby at the courtyard or on 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. in order to relieve Highland Dr. from having both the entrance to the parking garage and the pedestrian lobby. Placement of the lobby entrance off the courtyard would provide better engagement of the courtyard with the street and add raison d'être to the court. In both locations, pairing the lobby and open space would benefit the project. (November 16, 2011)

- 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.**

With the architect's reluctance to construct the parking garage at a lower depth, the formation of garage walls along the courtyard's perimeter (particularly on Broadway) places the open space at roughly four feet above sidewalk level. The Board prefers a softer edge along Broadway. Lowering the garage would eliminate the distance between the sidewalk level and the courtyard. Terracing the walls between the sidewalk and the courtyard would provide a raised landscaped edge. (November 16, 2011)

**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.**

The parking garage would likely have large screens to enable adequate ventilation. The presence of these vents on the public realm represents a concern. The design should minimize or eliminate their presence on the pedestrian. Location of the vents will need to be shown at the next meeting. (September 21, 2011)

See guidance for D-3. (November 16, 2011)

**D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas. Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.**

## **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.**

New concept drawings will need to show how the design reinforces the characteristics of the surrounding neighborhood. Generous setbacks and preservation of mature trees are important attributes. (September 21, 2011)

**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.**

The Board questioned the necessity of placing useable open space on the roof. While many new projects have installed roof gardens in recent years, the generous amount of open space at the courtyard and along the edges would likely satisfy residential needs particularly if the design had amenities to accommodate the activities of the tenants. (November 16, 2011)

## **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 initial Early Design Guidance meeting, the applicant preliminarily requested three departures: increasing structure width from 120 (maximum code compliant) to 180 feet; reducing the driveway width from 20 to 16 feet, and reducing separate façade planes required for street facing elevations. The Board opposed the departure request for increasing structure width. It will entertain the request for narrowing the driveway. The Board members did not address the third request. The information provided was confusing and not appropriate at this level of concept design. (September 21, 2011)

## **BOARD DIRECTION**

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

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