



City of Seattle

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



FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012337

Address: 1145 Tenth Avenue East

Applicant: Tony Fan

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, April 04, 2012

Board Members Present: Dawn Bushnaq
Ric Cochrane
Lisa Picard
Wolf Saar
Chip Wall
Bo Zhang

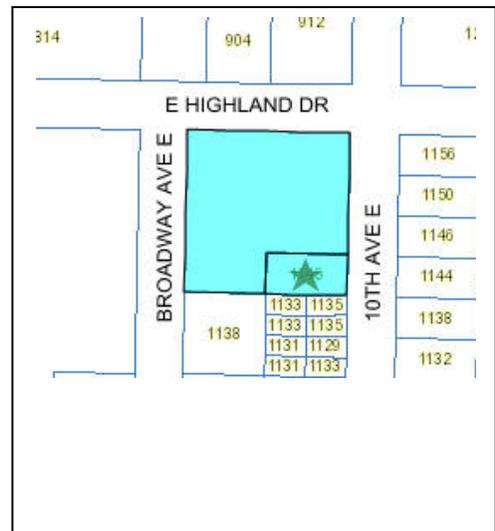
DPD Staff Present: Bruce Rips

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 70 dwelling units and parking for 85 vehicles in a below grade garage. Vehicular access would occur on East Highland Drive. 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 10th 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., 10th 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 10th 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 10th Ave. E. This scheme attempts to preserve most of the trees lining the property lines with the exception of several on 10th Ave. E. Each of the options shows a curb cut and driveway on E. Highland.

By the Recommendation meeting, the applicant had refined the "L" shaped scheme with the courtyard oriented to Broadway E. by siting the formal residential entry onto 10th Ave E. and the garage access on E. Highland Dr.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 21 members of the public affixed their names to the Recommendation meeting sign-in sheet. The public commented on the following issues:

Massing

- Many people who spoke supported the orientation of the structure with its courtyard facing Broadway.
- Buildings on the north side of Highland Dr. have two stories. The third floor of the proposal should acknowledge the consistent height of structures on this street by stepping back.
- The "L" shaped mass creates winners and losers. If the Board and the city do not grant the departure request (structure width), all the neighbors will be winners. (This was mentioned by others.)
- The proposed design saves the most trees.
- Placing the courtyard on the southeast corner of the site would gather the noise from 10th Ave which would be a disservice to the residents.
- The departure for structure width is supportable. (Several members of the public expressed this sentiment.)
- Simplify the massing by eliminating much of the modulation.

Building and Courtyard Orientation

- The courtyard should face 10th Ave. E. rather than Broadway E.

Access

- The project lacks a drop-off area. At the very least, there should be on-street parking near the entrance with limits on the duration of parking.
- 10th Ave. makes more sense for the drop-off parking. The courtyard should face 10th Ave. The courtyard on Broadway is not practical or functional.
- The garage entry presents a safety concern.

Open Space/ Landscaping

- The programming of the open spaces isn't always clear from the drawings.
- The benches along the right of way will attract undesirable activity. Benches should be available and oriented to the residents.

Noise

- Mechanical noise produced by the garage and the HVAC system concerned a neighbor.

Preservation of Trees

- Many of the speakers praised the effort to preserve the trees.

DPD Letters received approximately 17 letters immediately prior to and after the Recommendation meeting. Most supported the changes to the proposal; however, other letters criticized the building orientation and its proximity to the south property line. Some of the issues in the letters pertained to SEPA issues such as traffic and sight lines.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance. The Board identified the Citywide Design Guidelines & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

A. Site Planning

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

The Board accepted the orientation of the "L" shaped building.

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 expressed its satisfaction that the relationship of the proposed building to the townhouses to the south had been enhanced by the architect's changes---retention of trees along the south property, installation of additional trees, the elimination of balconies, and modulations in the setback from the property line

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

The applicant developed a series of discrete private and semi-private open spaces along the property edges in response to earlier guidance. Section E-2 of this report recommends that the landscape architect refine these spaces.

The Board also accepted the redesign of the northeast corner.

- 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 Board recommended granting the departure for a reduced curb cut width.

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 proposal's massing provoked considerable deliberation over three meetings. In response to earlier discussion focused on the possibility of a setback at the third floor on the north façade, the Board agreed with the execution of the massing as presented at the Recommendation meeting.

The Board recommended granting the departure request to extend the maximum structure width from 120 feet to 178 feet as the scheme produced generous open spaces, preservation of trees and considerable modulation along the wall's length.

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 facade walls.**

For the Recommendation meeting, the applicant eliminated some of the perceived extraneous architectural embellishments from the design. However, the Board asked for additional modifications to the facades. See recommendations for C-4.

- 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.**

After extensive deliberation, the Board recommended several refinements to simplify the materials and to emphasize the planarity of the walls. To achieve this aim, the overall number of separate materials should be reduced. For the Board, the use of both stucco and fiber cement board was excessive, encouraging the elimination of one of these materials. The excessive number of pieces as represented on Sheet A28 in the fiber cement board and trim should also be reduced to produce greater planarity. Acting to

reduce some of the arbitrariness in the application of the materials, the Board recommended that rather than having the brick end midway between the level of the third floor line and the cornice, the brick should extend to the cornice. In special instances such as the northeast corner with its serrated or chevron design, the Board expressed its satisfaction with the visual break occurring at the floor line. Metal or slate should replace asphalt tiles (Sheet A28). The architect should also bring the brick to the metal window frame. The architect should strive to express a common language between the use of wood and fiber cement.

In sum, the changes or transitions to different materials should occur at logical planar shifts. The modulations or shifts in the many vertical planes, expressing each dwelling unit, were acceptable to the Board as the shadows produced by the shifts will provide depth and visual interest.

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 applicant carved an open space in front of the primary residential entry near 10th Ave. E. The Board noted that the possible development of a drop-off area on Broadway at the courtyard would require changes to the entrance stairs from the sidewalk. A revised design would produce a more welcoming entry sequence beginning with a wider staircase.

- 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 possible exception of the stairs to the courtyard on Broadway, the Board accepted the revisions to the retaining wall and parking plinth.

- 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.**

Emission of garage exhaust would occur at the southwest corner of the site behind a water fountain in the courtyard. Plantings would surround the exhaust vent and obscure it from public view.

E. Landscaping

E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site. Landscaping, including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture, and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.

Prior to MUP issuance, the applicant will refine the landscaping to show greater detail. The Board recommended that paving patterns and materials, furniture, and the lighting concept plan will need to be reviewed and approved by the land use planner.

In addition, the landscape architect will refine the critical transitions (and terminations) between public open space, semi-private space and private space along the perimeter of the site for review by DPD staff. At the northeast corner, the designer should produce greater porosity between the public space along the sidewalk and the private realm but retain the secure boundaries as currently defined by the brick wall. In essence, the design should clarify the ownership of the corner and define it as public, semi-public or public space.

The location of the benches so close to the public sphere raised some doubts by the Board members. A possible reorientation of the benches or providing additional planting to screen the sitting areas would create a more suitable semi-public zone.

The Board, illuminating some of the public comment, observed that the area near the stairs leading to the courtyard on Broadway would be a suitable drop-off area. If the applicant seizes upon this idea, the stairs should be redesigned to accommodate residents waiting or being dropped off. The stairs should be more welcoming and not resemble a back route to the complex.

Recommendations: The recommendations summarized below were based on the plans and models submitted at the April 4, 2012 meeting. Design, siting or architectural details not specifically identified or altered in these recommendations are expected to remain as presented in the plans and other drawings available at the April 4, 2012 public meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities, and reviewing the plans and renderings, the Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design and the requested development standard departures from the requirements of the Land Use Code (listed below). The Board recommends the following CONDITIONS for the project. (Authority referred in the letter and number in parenthesis):

- 1) Reduce the overall number of separate materials on the facades. The Board encouraged the elimination of either the stucco or the fiber cement board. (C-4)
- 2) Emphasize the planarity of the wall segments by reducing the number of pieces as represented on Sheet A28 in the fiber cement board and trim (C-4)
- 3) Extend the brick to the cornice where it ends midway between the line of the third floor and the cornice. (C-4)
- 4) Replace the asphalt tile with slate, metal or some other higher quality material. (C-4)

- 5) Refine the landscaping to show greater detail of materials. The planner will review and approve paving patterns and materials, furniture types, and the lighting concept plan. (E-2)
- 6) Clarify and refine the critical transitions (and terminations) between public open spaces, semi-private open spaces and private open spaces along the perimeter of the site. The planner will review and approve the changes based on the Board's expectations. (E-2)
- 7) Provide greater porosity between the public space along the sidewalk and the private realm but retain the secure boundaries as currently defined by the brick wall. (E-2)
- 8) If the applicant chooses to create a drop-off area along Broadway E., the stairs leading to the courtyard should be redesigned to accommodate residents waiting or being dropped off. The stairs should be wider and more welcoming. (E-2)

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) are 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).

STANDARD	REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	JUSTIFICATION	RECOMMENDATION
1. Maximum Structure Width SMC 23.45.527 Table A.	Maximum structure width allowed is 120'.	178'. This is 58' or 48% greater than required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minimizes the building mass on the south and west sides. ▪ Preserves mature trees along the site's perimeter. 	Recommended approval
2. Driveway Width. SMC 23.54.030D.1.c.	Minimum width is 20'.	16' driveway width. A 4' reduction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minimizes intrusion into the sidewalk. ▪ Adds four linear feet of additional landscaping to the pedestrian environment. 	Recommended approval