



City of Seattle

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



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE SOUTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012392

Address: 2721 17th Ave. S.

Applicant: Clayton Smith for Pacific Housing N.W.

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, October 25, 2011

Board Members Present: Brett Conway (Chair)
Sam Cameron
Amorena Miller
Stephen Uamada-Heider

Board Members Absent: Tony Case

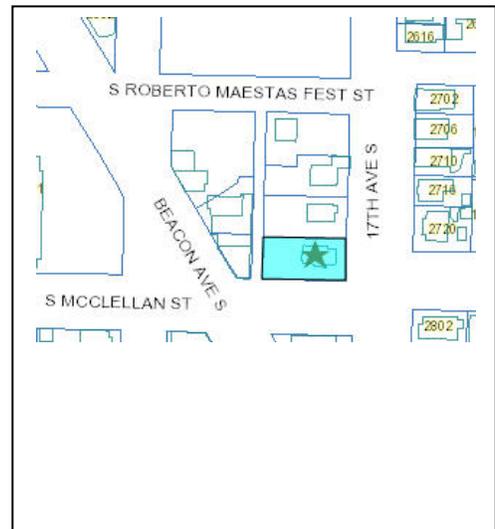
DPD Staff Present: Scott Kemp

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: NC2-40'; North Beacon Hill Residential Urban Village; Beacon Hill Light Rail Station Overlay District

Nearby Zones: (North) NC2-40'
(South) NC2P-40'
(East) SF 5000
(West) NC2P-40'

Lot Area: 7,200 sq.ft.



Current Development: The site is currently vacant.

Access: Access is possible from two adjacent streets and a public alley.

Surrounding Development: The proposal site is located within the commercial core of the North Beacon Hill neighborhood on the same block as the Sound Transit Light Rail Station which connects by elevator to trains in a tunnel below. The site is nearly adjacent to Beacon Ave N. being separated by an alley and a small section of vacant property. In the immediate area many urban uses are found including: a branch of the Seattle Public Library, coffee houses, restaurants, pizza parlors, the El Centro de la Raza Community Center, bank branches, and at supermarket grocery store.

ECAs: No ECAs are mapped or know on the site.

Neighborhood Character: Along Beacon Ave. S. in this area of Beacon Hill there is a traditional, neighborhood serving, commercial area which is now the commercial center of the North Beacon Hill Residential Urban Village. The subject site is at an edge of the commercial zoning with single family uses and zoning across 17th Ave. S. to the east. On the other three sides the site faces areas of commercial or transportation use, with the surface portion of the Sound Transit Light Rail station occupying the western half of the block on which the subject site is found.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Sample Text: Project description including uses, square footage of uses, number of residential units, number of stories, location of parking, number of parking stalls and access. Example: The proposed project is for the design and construction of a mixed use building with approximately 36 residential units located above ground level commercial use. All of the parking (approximately 70 stalls) for the proposed development is to be provided in a below grade garage that is accessed from the alley.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: October 19, 2011
--

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Five alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options include a multi-story, multifamily residential structure covering the great majority of the site, holding the corner of 17th and McClellan, while taking vehicle access from the public alley.

- One person indicated that using panel siding would look good, that there is no need for upper level setbacks, and that he is not worried about traffic congestion because it makes pedestrians safer.
- Residential looking siding would look out of place in this location.
- The design now looks like a little box, where it needs lightness, with a pedestrian environment along its base and commercial use all along McClellan.
- The siding needs to get inspiration from the new branch library and the new light rail station.
- The courtyard would be better used if it faced south, not north as shown at the meeting.
- Modulation patterns also need to be incorporated into the west wall because, although it faces the alley, it will be very visible.
- The neighborhood plan mentions the view along the alley next to the proposal site which forms a view corridor from the library to the El Centro de la Raza building.

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

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Retain or increase the width of sidewalks wherever feasible with consideration for bicycles creating a more comfortable environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.**
- Orient townhouse structures to provide pedestrian entrances to the sidewalk.**
- For buildings that span a block and face two streets, each street frontage should receive individual and detailed site planning as well as architectural design treatments to complement the established streetscape character. This is especially important for through streets and triangular shaped lots.**
- Build at or near the edge of the sidewalk and restrict grade separations where commercial uses occupy the ground floor.**
- Provide a shallow setback and a minor grade separation between the first floor and**

the sidewalk where residential uses occupy the ground floor; this will promote privacy and also accommodate entry porches and stoops.

- F. Place planting strips smartly to incorporate a more pleasing environment for all modes of transportation and incorporate LID interventions in the same space.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board indicated a commercial streetscape character is important along McClelland. Any live work units should be incorporated commercial in appearance and suitable for conversion to retail use at a later date. The development should extend the urban, commercial character of the urban village along its McClelland St frontage.

At the corner to 17th and McClelland a transition into residential character needs to be explored and designed. Streetscape considerations for design review include the alley, the pedestrian experience, lighting and transparency. The Board indicated that modulation, transparency or other features should be used to enhance the pedestrian nature at the corner and around the corner on 17th Ave. S, to some appropriate degree.

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

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- A. Provide for sidewalk retail opportunities and connections by allowing for the opening of the storefront to the street and the display of goods on the sidewalks.**
- B. Provide for outdoor dining opportunities on the sidewalk by allowing for the opening of restaurant or cafe windows to the sidewalk and installing outdoor seating.**
- C. Install clear glass windows along the sidewalk to provide visual access into the retail or dining activities that occur inside.**
- D. Do not block views into the interior spaces with the backs of shelving units or posters.**
- E. Maximize window widths and heights along sidewalk face of buildings to create inviting and interactive atmosphere between indoor and outdoor activities.**

Choose an item., the Board discussed...

- A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street. For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board stated that the incorporation of stoops between residential units and the street are highly favored. Residential entries to units along 17th Ave. S should be recessed from and elevated above the sidewalk and this transition would be well addressed with stoops.

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.**

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

Much of the North Beacon Hill business district is zoned for 40-foot tall mixed-use buildings. Most of the existing commercial structures in the area are one- and two-stories adjacent to single-family houses. Large, monolithic buildings are discouraged. Proper consideration of the scale, massing and detail of individual buildings will contribute to a project's compatibility with surrounding residential areas and a satisfying public environment.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the necessity for modulation to be incorporated into all four sides of the building. The additional upper level setback from the east as shown in Design Option E was endorsed as a good approach offering a lessened appearance of height, bulk and scale as viewed from the area of single family zoning in that direction. A well modulated west façade facing the alley is as important as the other sides as this side too will be visible from a distance. Four of the Board members thought that a horizontal, upper level setback from McClelland may not be necessary.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

- 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.**

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- A. Brick and Stone are the most common surface treatment in the commercial areas and are strongly encouraged. Below are some examples of bricks and stone used on Beacon Hill.**
- B. Signs should add interest to the street level environment. They can unify the overall**

architectural concept of the building, or provide unique identity for a commercial space within a larger mixed-use structure. Design signage that is appropriate for the scale, character and use of the project and surrounding area. Signs should be oriented and scaled for both pedestrians on sidewalks and vehicles on streets.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board stated that quality materials are called for. It stated that the guidelines for materials are well suited to this location and should be used when designing the building. Consideration of the context of materials used on other buildings is important next to the Sound Transit Station. The Library building has steel and glass and a lot of slate. The applicants should be creative in their use of materials. On the first floor, where a high level of pedestrian traffic is desired and anticipated, quality and durability of materials is highly important.

D. Pedestrian Environment

- 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board identified this as an important design consideration for this proposal.

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

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- A. Defensible Space**
- B. Access Control**
- C. Surveillance**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the importance of security lighting around the building and asked to see it incorporated future design materials.

- D-8 Treatment of Alleys. The design of alley entrances should enhance the pedestrian street front.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed how the alley has some view corridor and pedestrian function in addition to vehicle access. It should be designed with

the pedestrian experience in mind with considerations of lighting, transparency and chamfering the corner at McClelland.

D-9 Commercial Signage. Signs should add interest to the street front environment and should be appropriate for the scale and character desired in the area.

D-10 Commercial Lighting. Appropriate levels of lighting should be provided in order to promote visual interest and a sense of security for people in commercial districts during evening hours. Lighting may be provided by incorporation into the building façade, the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, in landscaped areas, and/or on signage.

D-11 Commercial Transparency. 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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed indicated that each of these three guidelines are important along S. McClelland and the commercial transparency guideline is especially important.

The Board that transparency through the building at the residential entry and lobby is would be an important feature for the pedestrian experience.

D-12 Residential Entries and Transitions. For residential projects in commercial zones, the space between the residential entry and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and a visually interesting street front for pedestrians. Residential buildings should enhance the character of the streetscape with small gardens, stoops and other elements that work to create a transition between the public sidewalk and private entry.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board indicated that the main residential entry should be clearly visible and identifiable. The stoops too should have identifiable entry points. While the code mandated separation from sidewalk would seem to work well for the units facing 17th Ave. S., the unit at the corner with McClelland St. might need to be looked at differently and have more of an on grade approach.

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.

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- A. Give purpose to plantings by incorporating multiple functions of the plantings, i.e., a planting can be a bioretention cell, provide shelter, shade and habitat while enhancing the overall aesthetic of Beacon Hill.**
- B. Native plants to the Pacific Northwest are encouraged because of their proven ability to perform well in our climate and their regional cultural significance.**
- C. Consider adding a focal element, for instance, an art piece to outdoor space.**
- D. Retain significant trees whenever possible.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board indicated that landscape should be used to enhance the building and that the courtyard proposed on the north side and stoops along the east facing live work units would be particular areas of landscape opportunity.

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. Residential Floor Level (SMC 23.47A.008):** The Code requires a street-facing residential unit to be at least 4 feet above or below sidewalk grade or be set back at least 10 feet from the sidewalk. The applicant proposes an unspecified amount of elevation above sidewalk grade and a layered landscape treatment to create added privacy for residents.

The Board indicated it would consider some reasonable amount of departure from the floor height requirement for residential uses facing the street provided the objectives or providing privacy for residents and an attractive pedestrian experience are accomplished.

- 2. Retail Depth (SMC 23.47A.008.B.2.a):** The Code requires required non-residential uses at grade to be an average of at least 30 feet in depth and minimum of 15 feet in depth. The applicant proposes to reduce the average depth of retail uses on the ground level to 19 feet.

The Board indicated appreciated the difficulty present in the shallow parcel and the necessity to have vehicle access behind the retail space.

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. The Board indicated it favors revision of the corner curb radius to shorten the pedestrian crossing

distance. It also indicated if the desired rezone for additional height were not to take place, a shorter building with substantially the same architectural expression could go forward without returning for further design review.