



# City of Seattle

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



## FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE SOUTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012392

Address: 2721 17th Avenue S

Applicant: Tim Abell, Pacific Housing NW

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, November 13, 2012

Board Members Present: Sam Cameron (Chair)  
Amoreena Miller  
Tony Case  
Benjamin Smith  
Stephan Yamada-Heidner

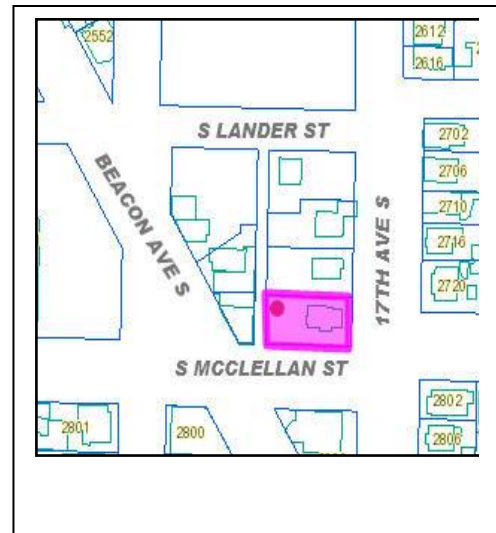
DPD Staff Present: Lindsay King

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial Two  
Pedestrian Zone with a 65 foot height limit (NC2P-65')

Nearby Zones: (North) NC2P-65  
(South) NC2P-65  
(West) NC2P-65  
(East) Single Family (SF 5000)

Lot Area: 7,200 square feet



Current Development: The site is currently vacant.

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

Surrounding Development: The 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 the trains in a tunnel below. The site is nearly adjacent to Beacon Ave N. being separated by an alley and a small section of a vacant property. In the immediate area many uses are found including: the El Centro de la Raza Community Center, bank branches, and a grocery store.

ECAs: There are no Environmentally Critical Areas on 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 Avenue 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.

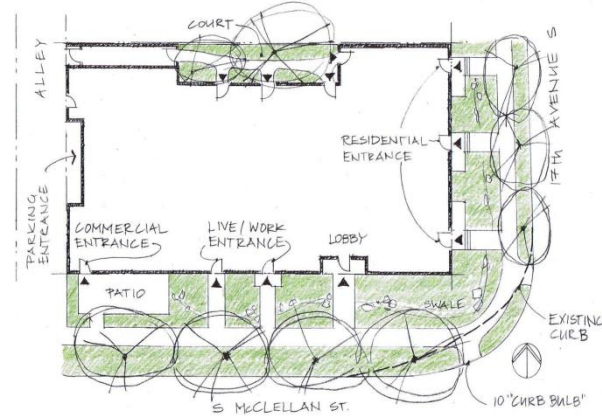
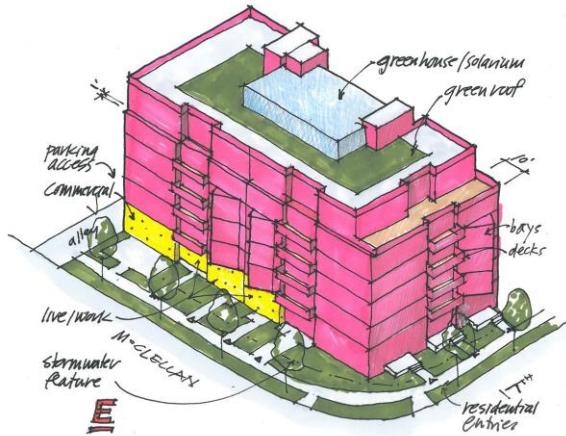
## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is for the design and construction of a mixed use building with approximately 46 residential units located above 2,046 sq. ft of retail space at the ground level. All of the parking (approximately 17 stalls) for the proposed development is to be provided in a below grade garage that is accessed from the adjacent alley.

<b>EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: October 25, 2011</b>
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## DESIGN PRESENTATION

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. Two of the options were designed for a 40 foot height limit, one with commercial use in the southwest region and one without and one with façade modulation and one without. Two of the options were designed for a 60 foot height limit and displayed the same two fundamental variations, one with commercial use and modulation and on without either. The applicant's preferred scheme was Option D shown below. The fifth option took Option D and developed some further modulation options.



**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Approximately 15 members of the public attended the Early Design Guidance meeting held on October 25, 2011. The following comments were offered:

- Believed the neighborhood design guidelines indicated a need for a setback at the third story level.
- Panel siding was not considered to be part of the existing context and a detailed use of stone, like used in the new branch library would be more appropriate.
- Commercial use at the sidewalk level would be very important in this location, especially along S. McClellan, as a contribution to the existing commercial core area.
- The building and adjacent areas need to be well lighted at the sidewalk level.
- The building should have deep modulation and decks avoiding a boxy appearance.
- A 65 foot tall building with limited or no upper level setbacks is a cause for concern requiring extensive use of height, bulk and scale control measures.
- Traffic gets heavy in the area where between 4:30 and 6:00 p.m.
- Building to the 65 foot height limit is good, and will work well, so long as there is more retail at the street level.
- One person indicated that using panel siding would look good, that there is no need for upper level setbacks, and that traffic congestion is acceptable 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.

At the EDG meeting, the Board focused on the following issues as they provided guidance:

**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 preliminarily identified the Citywide Design Guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE

<b>A. Site Planning</b>
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**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:**

- A. Retain or increase the width of sidewalks wherever feasible with consideration for bicycles creating a more comfortable environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.**
- B. Orient townhouse structures to provide pedestrian entrances to the sidewalk.**
- C. 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.**
- D. Build at or near the edge of the sidewalk and restrict grade separations where commercial uses occupy the ground floor.**
- E. 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 McClellan. Any live work units should incorporate commercial appearance and be suitable for conversion to retail use at a later date. The development should extend the urban, commercial character of the urban village along its McClellan St frontage.

At the corner to 17th and McClellan, 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.

**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**
- C. of restaurant or cafe windows to the sidewalk and installing outdoor seating.**
- D. Install clear glass windows along the sidewalk to provide visual access into the retail or dining activities that occur inside.**
- E. Do not block views into the interior spaces with the backs of shelving units or posters.**
- F. Maximize window widths and heights along sidewalk face of buildings to create inviting and interactive atmosphere between indoor and outdoor activities.**

**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>B. Height, Bulk and Scale</b>
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**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 nearby, 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 McClellan may not be necessary.

## **C. 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 desired. 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 McClellan.

**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. McClellan and the commercial transparency guideline is especially important.

The Board agreed 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 McClellan 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.**

- 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.

## **F. FINAL RECOMMENDATION MEETING: November 13, 2012**

The packet includes materials presented at the Recommendation meeting, and is available online by entering the project number at this website:  
[http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design\\_Review\\_Program/Project\\_Reviews/Reports/default.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp)

or contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

**Address: Public Resource Center**  
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000  
Seattle, WA 98124



**Email:** PRC@seattle.gov

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Approximately 11 members of the public attended the Recommendation meeting held on November 13, 2012. The following comments were offered:

- Vehicle accessing by the alley will exit onto busy intersection to the south or festival street to the north. When festival street is closed access to and from the site will be very difficult.
- Alley should not be used for vehicle access.
- Work with Seattle Police Department to design landscaping to create safe spaces.
- Incorporate pedestrian street lighting on McClellan Street.
- Incorporate upper level setbacks at 40'.
- Enlarged parking planter strip with green storm water is a good addition to the project.
- Do not like color choice of orange and green. However use of brick facing 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue S is a good choice in material.
- 17th Avenue S will have substantial increased traffic and currently lacks sufficient parking for increased density and commercial visitors to site.
- Providing benches on McClellan will encourage use by transients. Do not want to encourage people to stop and sit.
- Compliment trying to make the building attractive.

## **PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS**

At the Recommendation meeting, the Board discussed the response to EDG and offered the following recommendations for the proposal to meet the applicable Design Review Guidelines identified at the EDG meeting.

### **1. 17th Avenue Façade:**

- a. The Board was concerned about the decreased top floor setback on 17th Avenue S. The Board recommended the 6th floor setback on 17th Avenue S increase from 7 feet to 10 feet from street property line consistent with original EDG approved massing proposal. This setback is required to mitigate height, bulk and scale impacts to adjacent single family zoning across the street (B-1).

### **2. Materials:**

- a. The Board was pleased with the choice in materials, particularly the brick provided on the residential 17th Avenue S façade (C-4).

- b. The Board agreed the cementitious panel provided throughout the structure should be a high quality commercial grade material as shown (C-4).
- c. The Board noted the use of real wood at ground level near all street level entries as an important point of continuity in the overall development (C-4).

### **3. Lighting:**

- a. The Board wished to see additional lighting provided in the alley. The Board felt lighting should be provided on the alley wall at equal intervals to create a rhythm that will be continued with future development along the alley (D-7, D-8, D-10).
- b. The Board noted that the alley façade would benefit from focused lighting in all recessed entries along the alley, at alley artwork, grass landscaping and concrete support at intersection of alley and McClellan Street (D-7, D-10).
- c. The Board felt the central courtyard on the north façade would benefit from additional lighting. The courtyard should be well lit to avoid a feeling of a dark hole once the property to the north is developed. Lighting should be cutoff to minimize impacts to residential units above (D-7).
- d. The Board wished the applicant to investigate use of pedestrian-scale lighting on S McClellan Street to create a safe, comfortable pedestrian walking environment. Provide lighting along the length of the sidewalk but also focused on seating areas in the right-of-way and areas of landscaping to minimize dark corners (D-7, D-10).

### **4. Architectural Concept**

- a. The Board was pleased with the evolution in asymmetrical massing. The building provides two primary massings, each designed to reflect the uses adjacent, commercial along Beacon Avenue S and residential along 17th Avenue S (C-2).
- b. The Board was also very pleased with the ground level units on 17th Avenue S which relate well to the single family homes across the street (A-5).
- c. The Board agreed that the widened sidewalk meeting the street level wall adjacent to the primary residential entry and ground level commercial use further activates the street wall and uses (D-12).
- d. The Board agreed locating durable artwork on alley wall enhances the pedestrian experience (D-8).

### **5. Landscape Design**

- a. The Board felt the proposed landscaping at street level should be informed by Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CEPTED) techniques to encourage safety places and minimize potential hiding spots (D-7, E-2).
- b. The Board recommended proposed landscaping along S McClellan Street, adjacent to the residential unit, be design to minimize headlights from entering windows along the corner. Consider use of short trees directly adjacent to wall to maximize privacy while minimizing dead inactive next to sidewalk (E-2).

## DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

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

1. **Street Level Uses (SMC 23.47A.005 C2, D1 and. 23.47A.008 D1):** The Code requires that certain street level uses should be located on at least 80% of the street level street facing facades. The applicant proposes 56.7% due to the inclusion of residential uses along S McClellan Street.

The Board unanimously recommended in favor of this departure. The Board was satisfied that the location of residential uses at street level will not detract from the vibrancy of commercial use along the principal pedestrian street, S McClellan Street. Locating residential use along 17th Avenue across the street from the single family zone creates an unusual challenge along the street corner. Providing usable residential use along the corner requires maintaining sufficient depth to provide a viable living space. The design has been revised since the EDG submittal to include brick material treatment at ground level, windows into living space areas and textured landscaping between the façade and the sidewalk to help mitigate privacy issues and blank facades facing the pedestrian street. (A-4, A-5, A-6, A-10, B-1, C-3, C-4, D-2, E-2).

2. **Street Level Uses (SMC 23.47A.008 D3):** The Code requires residential uses along a street facing, street level facades shall be setback 10 feet from the sidewalk or located at least 4 feet above or below sidewalk grade.

The Board unanimously recommended in favor of this departure with conditions. The Board felt the residential use at ground level would be enhanced by being located above the sidewalk grade as required by code. However the Board recognized the site is flat and felt that stepping the ground floor plate was unnecessary. The Board felt the overall building design is enhanced by maintaining a consistent street wall along the street property line. Privacy impacts are mitigated by strategic landscaping to obscure visual site lines into the ground level living spaces. The Board wished to see additional use of architectural treatment on the inside or outside of the structure to mitigate vehicle headlights from entering the

unit. Finally, the Board encouraged use of low level lighting on sidewalk and within landscaping buffer adjacent to sidewalk to provide safe spaces (A-2, A-6, A-10, C-4, D-2, D-7, D-10, and D-2).

## **BOARD RECOMMENDATION**

**The recommendation summarized below was based on the design review packet dated November 13, 2012, and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the November 13, 2012, Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, the four Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design. The Board recommends the following CONDITIONS (Authority referred in the letter and number in parenthesis):**

1. Revise plans to provide a 10 foot setback from the street property line to the 6<sup>th</sup> floor level along 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue S consistent with EDG proposal.
2. Further treat residential unit on S McClellan Street for privacy and vehicle headlight impacts by incorporating strategic landscaping meeting CPTED techniques or incorporating interior or with exterior architectural treatment such as raising window sill, providing architectural detailing or including louvers on lower section of windows to avoid direct line-of-site from the sidewalk into the unit.
3. Update lighting plan to include specific lighting as recommended by the Board.
  - a) Lighting along the alley at equal intervals, in recessed doorways, and focused lighting on the alley artwork, landscaping and support pole.
  - b) Lighting within the courtyard.
  - c) Pedestrian scale lighting along the right-of-way sidewalk and within street landscaping and furniture.