



**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE
QUEEN ANNE/MAGNOLIA DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

Project Number: 3012432

Address: 717 Third Ave N

Applicant: Amoreena Miller of Strata Architects
architecture | urban design

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, October 19, 2011

Board Members Present: David Delfs (Chair)
Jill Kurfirst
Lipikia Mukerji

DPD Staff Present: Colin R. Vasquez, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site
Zone: LR3

Nearby
Zones: (North) LR3

(South) NC2-40

(East) LR3

(West) LR3

Lot
Area: ... square feet

Access: Pedestrian and vehicle access would be from Third Ave N.

Surrounding Development: The property north of the site has a four story apartment building. The property south of the site has a five story mixed use building. East of the site is Third Ave N.

ECAs: None.

Neighborhood Context. Uptown is a very lively neighborhood that encompasses Seattle Center which hosts some of the city’s best known landmarks including, The Space Needle, Key Arena, and the EMP. A diverse mix of activities occurs throughout the neighborhood, and a variety of services are provided for the residents. Lower Queen Anne is home to over 100 restaurants and bars as well as a wide array of shopping opportunities that provide something for everyone. Seattle Center is the City’s backyard and just blocks from the proposed development.

Neighborhood Character: **Residential Context.** The neighborhood consists of many historic apartment buildings that are simple brick structures constructed at the beginning of the last century. The apartment buildings are small in nature when compared to newer apartment complexes. The massing of the structures are simple using quality material and attention to detail. In addition to the many brick building around the neighborhood, there are a number of building that use exterior corridors, and this is especially true near Seattle Center. Many of the buildings incorporate intimate courtyards for the residents and landscaping along the sidewalk.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The site is located in Lower Queen Anne near Seattle Center. There is an existing building that currently has 8 units. The property is zoned LR3. The property to the south is zoned NC2-40 and contains a five story mixed use building. The property to the north has a four story apartment building.

The existing eight (8) unit building will demolished to construct the twenty (20) unit Built Green apartment building. The building will be between 30’ and 34’ high with four stories of housing and one level of below grade parking for 16 vehicles and will include bicycle parking. Trash and recycle will be located in the parking garage.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: October 19, 2011

DESIGN PRESENTATION

Three development options were presented — **Option A**, an option providing open space at the rear yard as well as in an interior courtyard for the residents. The building steps in the rear to include 3 units at the upper level. A rooftop courtyard would be provided at this level with elevator access.

Option B, in this option the applicant explores using a prefab unit to speed up construction time and reduce the construction impacts on the neighborhood. This option provides open space at the rear yard as well as in a narrow courtyard for the residents. This option would only have 3 stories of residential space and there would be no rooftop courtyard. **Option C**, is code compliant scheme based on a double loaded corridor and brings the entire building up in elevation to reduce the amount of shoring that is necessary. This option provides open space at the front of the project as well as in the rear yard. The parking garage is about 4' above grade at the front of the building. There are currently no decks planned for this option. This option would only have 3 stories of residential space and there would be no rooftop courtyard.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Five members of the public attended the Design Review Meeting. The property owner who owns an apartment building on the southeast corner of the intersection of Valley Street and 2nd Avenue stated the following:

- ⤴ He is concerned about the potential risk of damage to his property due to shoring required for the construction of the new building in question.

The board responded by informing him that this is not a topic covered at the EDG meeting but would rather be dealt with during the building code review. The property owner also remarked:

- ⤴ He prefers scheme B.
- ⤴ He likes the contemporary facade study that was presented.

PRIORITIES & BOARD GUIDANCE

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 design recommendations.

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, located on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.

The existing site has a change in topography of 14'. The entrance to the parking garage will be situated on the low side of the site, while the entrance to the units will be situated on the higher side (east). The building will respond to the existing topography. The site contains trees that the developer would like to be saved during the construction process. The massing of the building is intended to stay out of the drip line of the trees located in the southwest corner of the site.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board inquired about code compliance for the landscape buffer at the setback. The Board requests the design team provide detail on this at the next meeting.

The Board also requested a study of more developed response to street and would like to see more transparency at the street.

A-3 Entrances Visible from the street

The main entrance will be oriented towards the east to be located on Third Ave N. The main entrance will be visible from the street to provide a clear entry for pedestrians and vehicles. The main entrance is recessed to provide a covered entry area.

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.

Adjacent buildings are 4 and 5 story buildings. The proposed building will be complimentary of the adjacent structures. The adjacent structures have existing balconies and the massing and location of the proposed building responds to the balcony locations to ensure privacy for the adjacent site as well as potential tenants.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board requested the design team to review design options for the northern pedestrian access and the appearance of the façade as viewed from the northern properties.

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.

A minimal setback will be provided for the building, but the entrance will be treated with a recess to allow for a more gracious entrance. Landscaping will be used to create a buffer between the building and the sidewalk.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board stated that it would like to see a study of proper screening between the proposal and the northern properties.

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

Courtyard elements are desired for this location, creating a private/public space for the residence with the potential for individual gardens in this area. There will also be a large at grade open area for the residents on the west side of the site adjacent to the existing trees. All of the open space is currently at grade. There is the potential for amenity space on the roof.

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 project should be compatible with the adjacent buildings. The existing apartment buildings in the neighborhood are a range of 3 to 5 story buildings. The applicant should look to complementary architectural style nearby that can be incorporating a base, middle and top for the building.

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 “dreary context” at the site, except for Bick’s Grill Restaurant nearby. Bick’s could help make this the “identity” of the neighborhood.

- 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.

Exterior finish materials are still being determined, but will be an important part of this project. The materials need to be sustainable and durable.

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 area should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented space should be considered.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board stated that it would like to see a study of the residential entry.

- D-2 Blank Walls.** Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.

D-6 Screening of Dumpsters

All services will be within the parking structure.

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

D-12 Residential Entry.

The entry will be distinctive, but we are still looking at that design element.

E. Landscaping

E-1 Landscaping to Enhance the Building

This will be an important feature for this project and will require lot of thought to incorporate the existing trees on the site and add new landscape elements.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board stated that is would like a study of landscaping at the building base.

Requested Departures

A departure was requested for the location of the garage door. The applicants proposed recessing the garage door 7' rather than the code required 15'. This allows the door to align with the structure above and eliminates a hole in the facade and therefore would be complimentary to the entire facade.

A departure was requested for the depth of the building. Code states that when the average setback is less than 10' from the property line the maximum building depth cannot exceed 65% of the Lot, which in this case equates to 83'. The applicants proposed extending the max depth to 92' versus the allowed 83'. This request was made because of the need for the units to be standardized in order to use the intended pre-fabricated construction method.

The board recommended asking for a third departure to move the entire building two feet towards the rear of the lot. This would place the building two feet beyond the required 15' rear setback.

CLOSING COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD:

The board liked the overall direction of the project and recognized the preferred scheme B as an appropriate response to the site. The board recognized that some of the neighbors may also find scheme B to be the most appealing option as it has the lowest overall height and therefore will have the least impact on the neighboring properties' views. The board acknowledges the benefit of the proposed exterior walkways as they allow every unit to have the ability for cross ventilation as well as

better day lighting. The board identified the importance of screening on the exterior walkways in regards to both privacy and shading neighboring buildings from exterior lighting.

The board also responded well to the inclusion of a courtyard on the main level and they preferred the courtyard of scheme A to scheme B as it was larger. The board identified the importance of properly designing the courtyard and landscaping of scheme B as it will be confined to a small area. Of the two facade studies present the board preferred the contemporary facade study to the traditional facade study. The board appreciated the contemporary styling of the facade as well as the recessed entry and articulated entrance. The board recommended paying careful attention to the detailing the facade materials with particular attention paid to the detailing of the corners. The board recommended considering making the front stair more transparent. The board suggested looking into moving the elevator to the rear of the property in order to discourage its' use and encourage usage of the stairs.

The Board was very supportive and recommended approval of the design presented in scheme B.

Development Standard Departures

The board supported both departures that were requested as well as recommending a third departure that would place the building two feet beyond the 15' required rear setback.

The board approved the project for EDG and looks forward to further refinement at the Recommendation Meeting. The project is ready to apply for master use permit.

Recommendation meeting will require the following:

- Color and Materials board
- More detailed design drawings for
- General siting and massing is accepted; however the exterior façades needs to be reviewed.