



City of Seattle

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



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012652

Address: 1515 14th Ave

Applicant: Stevan Johnson, Johnson Architects for Madrona Real Estate

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, October 19, 2011

Board Members Present: Evan Bourquard (Chair)
Dawn Bushnaq
Lisa Picard
Wolf Saar
Chip Wall

Board Members Absent: None

DPD Staff Present: Lisa Rutzick

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial 3, Pedestrian Street, 65' height (NC3P-65), Pike Pine Urban Center Village, Pike Pine Conservation Overlay District

Nearby Zones: (North) NC3P-40
(South) NC3P-65
(East) NC3P-65
(West) NC3P-65

Lot Area: 20,475 sq. ft.



Current Development: Three single story commercial structures with surface parking. Two of these buildings are over 75 years old and qualify as “Character Structures” per the Pike Pine Conservation Overlay District. The 1515 14th Avenue Building (the Porch Light Building) was built in 1925 and recently renovated. Most of the street facing façade is glazed (large display windows below smaller clerestories. This structure is proposed to be preserved and integrated into the design of the proposed building. The second building, 1525 14th Avenue was built in 1933 and is proposed to be demolished.

Access: From 14th Avenue

Surrounding Development: Variety of styles on 14th Avenue between Pike and Pine Streets. The west side is bookended by two century old brick structures with surface parking and several building type in between. The east side is predominantly occupied by a church complex (Seattle Landmark) and surface parking.

ECAs: None

Neighborhood Character: The Pike Pine corridor is historically known as auto row and is characterized by turn-of-the-century loft building with tall fully glazed street level storefront, masonry and timber construction.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is for the design and construction of a mixed use building with approximately 100 residential units located above 6,400 sq. ft f ground level retail use. All of the parking (approximately 111 stalls) for the proposed development is to be provided in a below grade garage that is accessed from the street. A portion of one of the two existing buildings is proposed to be retained as a character structure.

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DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Three alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options include access from the street (14th Avenue).

The first scheme (Option A) showed demolition of all of the existing buildings. The building mass was shifted towards the street edge and the terrace area is on the west side, at the second level. Garage entry was located at the south end of the site.

The second scheme (Option B) showed includes preservation of one of the character structures. The building above the character structure was set back 15 feet. The building mass above the ground level was barbell shaped and symmetrical with the residential entrance located at the center. The garage entry was on the north end of the site.

The third scheme (Option C) and preferred alternative also included preservation of one of the character structures. The building mass above the character structure was set back 15 feet, notches inwards and then extends to the front property line, flush with the retail base. The western elevation was jagged and stepped creating an irregular form. The garage entrance was located on the north end.

Staff Note: Preservation of one of the two character structures will allow an added ten feet in building height for the entire structure.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 15 members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting and one comment letter was received. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Concerned with the proposed height, density and traffic.
- Felt that the Porch Light building should be preserved and the new façade could be juxtaposed with the old façade. Suggested that courtyard be located in the center of the building to break up the massing as the proposed massing is enormous compared to the existing buildings.
- Clarified property lines, building depth and west elevation.
- Preferred the third scheme and the preservation of the Porch Light Building. Supported brick base in keeping with the Capitol Hill context. Added retail is a good addition to the neighborhood. Setting back the building is preferred so that the pedestrian does not feel overwhelmed by the mass.
- Preferred the setback and access to air allowed with the third scheme that created more of a human element with the open spaces.
- Opposed the proposed building height – six stories is too large; four would be more appropriate.

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-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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board strongly encouraged preservation of the existing character structure. The Board supported the setting back of the building mass above the character structure. In order to emphasize the presence of the character structure, the Board also recommended setting back the new building mass at the ground level, abutting the character structure to give a more distinct expression of this historic building.

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Retain or increase the width of sidewalks.
- Provide street trees with tree grates or in planter strips, using appropriate species to provide summer shade, winter light, and year-round visual interest.
- Vehicle entrances to buildings should not dominate the streetscape.
- Orient townhouse structures to provide pedestrian entrances to the sidewalk.
- For buildings that span a block and “front” on two streets, each street frontage should receive individual and detailed site planning and architectural design treatments to complement the established streetscape character.
- New development in commercial zones should be sensitive to neighboring residential zones. Examples include lots on Broadway that extend to streets with residential character, such as Nagle Place or 10th or Harvard Avenues East. While a design with a commercial character is appropriate along Broadway, compatibility with residential character should be emphasized along the other streets.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board emphasized the importance of this guideline and look forward to reviewing greater details at the next meeting. The Board noted that the retail height of the new structure should be 20 feet to respond to the scale of the character structure.

- A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street. Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board strongly suggested locating the residential entrance at the base of the building notch created by the joining of the

existing character structure with the new building mass. The Board also strongly recommended carrying the notch to the ground plane to emphasize the Porch Light building. See also A-1.

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Provide for sidewalk retail opportunities and connections by allowing for the opening of the storefront to the street and displaying goods to the pedestrian.
- Provide for outdoor eating and drinking opportunities on the sidewalk by allowing for the opening the restaurant or café windows to the sidewalk and installing outdoor seating while maintaining pedestrian flow.
- Install clear glass windows along the sidewalk to provide visual access into the retail or dining activities that occur inside. Do not block views into the interior spaces with the backs of shelving units or with posters.

See A-1 and A-2.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the importance of sensitivity and privacy to the Chester Building to the north by locating fenestration and/or the light well off center from the fenestration and light well of the Chester Building.

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Incorporate quasi-public open space with new residential development or redevelopment, with special focus on corner landscape treatments and courtyard entries.
- Create substantial courtyard-style open space that is visually accessible to the public view.
- Set back development where appropriate to preserve a view corridor.
- Set back upper floors to provide solar access to the sidewalk and/or neighboring properties.
- Mature street trees have a high value to the neighborhood and departures from development standards that an arborist determines would impair the health of a mature tree are discouraged.

- Use landscape materials that are sustainable, requiring minimal irrigation or fertilizer.
- Use porous paving materials to minimize stormwater run-off.

The Board looks forward to reviewing the detail of the second level terrace plans at the next meeting.

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.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment in residential and commercial areas by providing for continuous sidewalks that are unencumbered by parked vehicles and are minimally broken within a block by vehicular access.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board stated that the quality of the building should not be compromised by the provision of parking and locating the driveway access from the street. The presence of the driveway should be minimized and strive to enhance the streetscape, rather than create an intrusion.

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.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Break up building mass by incorporating different façade treatments to give the impression of multiple, small-scale buildings, in keeping with the established development pattern.
- Consider existing views to downtown Seattle, the Space Needle, Elliott Bay and the Olympic Mountains, and incorporate site and building design features that may help to preserve those views from public rights-of-way.
- Design new buildings to maximize the amount of sunshine on adjacent sidewalks throughout the year.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board expressed concern about the building massing and how it relates to the preservation of the character structure. The proportion of the character structure appears diminutive compared the building mass proposed to

envelope it; thus the new building should be modulated to shift away from and consequently highlight the character structure. The architectural cues of the character structure should also inform the design of the new building. The Board suggested setting back the massing above 40 feet to minimize the height, bulk and scale of the new structure and relate better to the scale of the preserved character structure. The other option would be to set back the building above 20 feet to distinguish the retail base and respond to the datum line established by the Porch Light structure.

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 strongly supported preservation of the character structure. The specified that if the character structure is proposed to be demolished, then a Second EDG meeting is needed.

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.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- **Incorporate signage that is consistent with the existing or intended character of the building and the neighborhood.**
- **Solid canopies or fabric awnings over the sidewalk are preferred.**
- **Avoid using vinyl awnings that also serve as big, illuminated signs.**
- **Use materials and design that is compatible with the structures in the vicinity if those represent the desired neighborhood character.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that the architectural concept for the upper floors along the south and west elevation include jagged, irregular massing that is out of sync with the architecture presented at the front (east) elevation. The Board agreed that all of the building elevations should relate to each other and avoid creating irregular forms that are not well integrated into the overall building concept. The building concept and architecture should be clearly established along the front façade and then inform side and rear elevations.

The Board suggested including the 20-foot retail height (with mezzanine) in the northern half of the building to respond to the same condition of the character structure. The Board would like to see more details of the character structure and the mezzanine typology. This examination should inform the design of the proposed building.

The Board recommended that the northern portion of the building relate to the 20-foot base either in plane or set back as a way of acknowledging the unique conditions associated with each half of the development.

The Board supported maintaining light and air to the building wherever possible. The light slot along the north side should be strengthened to emphasize the access to light and air.

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Incorporate building entry treatments that are arched or framed in a manner that welcomes people and protects them from the elements and emphasizes the building's architecture.
- Improve and support pedestrian-orientation by using components such as: non-reflective storefront windows and transoms; pedestrian-scaled awnings; architectural detailing on the first floor; and detailing at the roof line.

See discussion of the retail base and character structure under A-1, A-2 and A-3.

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.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Use wood shingles or board and batten siding on residential structures.
- Avoid wood or metal siding materials on commercial structures.
- Provide operable windows, especially on storefronts.
- Use materials that are consistent with the existing or intended neighborhood character, including brick, cast stone, architectural stone, terracotta details, and concrete that incorporates texture and color.
- Consider each building as a high-quality, long-term addition to the neighborhood; exterior design and materials should exhibit permanence and quality appropriate to the Capitol Hill neighborhood.
- The use of applied foam ornamentation and EIFS (Exterior Insulation & Finish System) is discouraged, especially on ground level locations.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed that the materials should be very high quality and that brick is highly desired. Stucco would not be considered an appropriate material. Use of brick, particularly at the base for a strong street presence is recommended.

- 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.

See also A-8.

D. Pedestrian Environment

- 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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board stressed that the blank wall condition of the north elevation needs design treatment and/or articulation to provide visual relief of the blank facade. The design of the elevation should respect and respond to the Chester Building. The Board suggested expanding the light well configuration.

- 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.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Consolidate and screen dumpsters to preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment.

Broadway-specific supplemental guidance:

- For new development along Broadway that extends to streets with residential character—such as Nagle Place or 10th or Harvard Avenues East—any vehicle access, loading or service activities should be screened and designed with features appropriate for a residential context.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that they will want to see more information at the next meeting regarding the garbage and recycling service access and program.

- 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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that the next meeting should include information responding to this guideline.

- 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that the next meeting should include information responding to this guideline.

- 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 noted that the next meeting should include information responding to this guideline. The Board noted they expect to see full transparency for the length of the building.

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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the opportunities for landscape and hardscape features and programming of the wide sidewalk right-of-way, as well as the two second level terrace areas. At the next meeting, the Board looks forward to reviewing a well designed landscape plan for all three of the unique spaces.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, no departures were requested.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EDG meeting, the Board recommended that two more design review meetings are likely and the applicant could select whether to return for a Second EDG or move forwards to MUP Application in response to the guidance provided at this meeting. If the latter is chosen, two Recommendation meetings should be anticipated due to the complexity of integrating the character structure into the proposed development.