City of Seattle

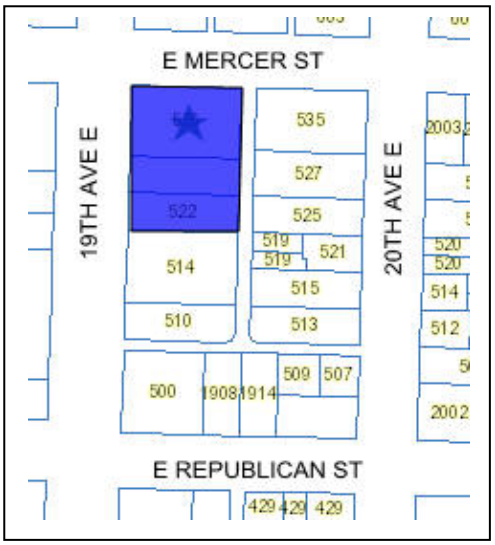
Department of Planning & Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE
EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number:	3012666
Address:	526 19th Avenue East
Applicant:	Daniel Goddard
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, November 16, 2011
Board Members Present:	Evan Bourquard Dawn Bushnaq Wolf Saar Chip Wall
Board Members Absent:	Lisa Picard
DPD Staff Present:	Bruce P. Rips

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone:	Neighborhood Commercial One with a 40' height limit (NC1 40).
Nearby Zones:	North: NC1 40 extends northward along 19th Ave E to E. Roy St. South: NC1 40 extends southward along 19th Ave E. to E. Republican St. East: Lowrise 2 east of the alley and along 20th Ave E. Single Family 5000 to the northeast and beyond 20th Ave. West: Single Family 5000 fronting 18th Ave. E.
Lot Area:	18,906 sq. ft.



Current Development:	Two single story commercial buildings and accessory parking. A change in grade occurs most noticeably along E. Mercer St. The site descends approximately four feet from west to east. Across 19th Ave E the site remains relatively flat.
Access:	19th Avenue E., East Mercer St. and an improved alley.
Surrounding Development & Neighborhood Character:	The site lies within the northern extents of the Madison-Miller Urban Residential Village and about three blocks to the east of the Capitol Hill Urban Center Village. Beyond the commercial corridor along Madison St., small nodes of commercial uses occur along 19th Ave E. as well as institutional uses such as the Miller Community Center and playfield, St. Joseph's church and school and the Stevens School. Other significant institutions in the area include Meany Middle School and the Nova project, and Holy Names Academy. In the immediate vicinity, several restaurants and retail establishments, Monsoon, Kingfish Café, Fuel, the Ensemble Theatre among others, line 19th Ave. The streetscape along 19th Ave is characterized by the mature tree canopy extending from Madison St north to the avenue's terminus at Interlaken Dr. E. Commercial enterprises, single family and lowrise and midrise multifamily structures front on to 19th Ave.
ECAs:	No mapped environmental critical areas

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes a four story mixed use building with 6,500 sq. ft. of commercial development at street level, 51 dwelling units on the floors above and parking both below grade in an enclosed garage and unenclosed at-grade along the alley. The existing structures would be demolished.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The concept design scenarios introduced by the applicant share several characteristics: locating commercial uses along the two adjacent streets, placing the residential lobby at the same location on 19th Ave E. marked with a vertical notch in the west facade, accessing the parking garage from the alley, shifting the building mass close to the 19th Ave. right-of-way, and placing three floors of residential units with double loaded corridors above ground level. In Option A, the architect places a series of units behind the commercial uses accompanied by terraces overlooking the alley. This strategy provides a fairly generous setback of the structure from the alley. The second option gives over the entire first floor to commercial uses segmenting the northern uses from the others by the residential lobby and common space The architect carves

a series of light wells into the upper residential floors providing each unit greater access to natural light. The mass steps back from the alley but not as generously as the first option.

Similar to Option A, the third alternative places units behind the commercial uses at the first floor (raised slightly above the alley) but reduces the amount of patios for the units. These overlook a row of outdoor parking spaces that back onto the alley. A central courtyard provides light and air for the upper three floors of residential units and adds a light shaft on the south end of the structure that pairs with the adjacent Capitol Court's light well.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Five members of the public affixed their names to the Early Design Review meeting sign-in sheet. The following comments were received:

Courtyard & Open Space

- Favors an enhanced courtyard. Eight units from the adjacent building look into the court.
- Consider the proportions of the courtyard. It appears narrow.
- The four foot depth of the decks on the east side is not workable.

Traffic and parking

- Traffic congestion is a major problem. It is difficult to drive through the neighborhood.
- The added density proposed by the development will generate even more congestions and parking problems.
- The neighborhood needs a Residential Parking Zone (RPZ). This should be a condition.
- Most single family houses in the neighborhood don't have parking. Microsoft has a pick-up location at 19th and Mercer. This causes the employees to park in the neighborhood. Some of the restaurants in the neighborhood also generate a lot of on-street parking.
- Consider limiting the hours of the proposed restaurant in order to ameliorate the parking problem. How will commercial delivers to the restaurant occur?
- Construction parking will also be a problem.
- Garbage trucks have difficulty maneuvering in the alley.

Other issues

- A speaker praised scheme # 3.
- The character of the neighborhood is changing with the addition of apartment buildings.
- Considers the approach to storing and removal of solid waste a good one.

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.**

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

The upper levels of the proposed building extend beyond the wall of the first floor by setting back the storefronts. This increases the width of the sidewalk along 19th Ave. E. and provides a modest shelter above it. The Board observed the potentially awkward condition for the pedestrian at the juncture of the new structure and the different setback of the adjacent building to the south.

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

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

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.**

See guidance for A-7.

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

The Board endorsed Scheme # 3 with the conjoining courtyards. How these adjoining open spaces work together to enhance their use and avoid an awkward transition needs careful design attention.

An open stairs within the courtyard is preferable. Reorienting the stairs may result in a more dramatic space. The quality of the courtyard will influence the Board's decision on the related departure.

A-8 **<u>Parking and Vehicle Access</u>. Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties, and pedestrian safety.**

See guidance for D-8.

A-9 **<u>Location of Parking on Commercial Street Fronts</u>. Parking on a commercial street front should be minimized and where possible should be located behind a building.**

A-10 **<u>Corner Lots</u>. Building on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.**

B. Height, Bulk and Scale

B-1 **<u>Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility</u>. 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.**

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

C-1 **<u>Architectural Context</u>. 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.**

C-2 **<u>Architectural Concept and Consistency</u>. 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.**

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

C-4 **<u>Exterior Finish Materials</u>. 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.**

The Board did not discuss this guideline, but the choice and detailing of materials will likely be a consideration at the Recommendation meeting.

D. Pedestrian Environment

D-1 **<u>Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances</u>. 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.

D-2 **<u>Blank Walls</u>. 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-3 **<u>Retaining Walls</u>. 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.**

D-6 **<u>Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas</u>. 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.**

See guidance for D-8.

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

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

Noting their reservations regarding the allowance of parking adjoining the alley, the Board members stated a desire for a truly operational alley and adjoining service / parking area that accommodates trash and recycling retrieval, accommodates garbage trucks, shifts the commercial trash away from E. Mercer St. and the adjacent open space, and considers the habitability of the residential units overlooking the parking and alley. The area should be well designed with generous plantings. The Board urges the applicant to meet with SDOT to resolve the edges of the alley and E. Mercer St. to accommodate trucks. The parking area should have permeable pavers rather than asphalt.

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

An example of the type of commercial signage should be presented at the Recommendation meeting.

D-10 **<u>Commercial Lighting</u>. 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.**

The applicant will need to present a concept commercial lighting plan for the Recommendation meeting.

D-11 **<u>Commercial Transparency</u>. 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.**

Images presented at the EDG meeting indicated generous storefront glazing.

D-12 **<u>Residential Entries and Transitions</u>. 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.**

E. Landscaping

E-1 **<u>Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites</u>. Where possible, and where there is not another overriding concern, landscaping should reinforce the character of neighboring properties and abutting streetscape.**

E-2 **<u>Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site</u>. 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.**

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. SMC 23.47A.016 Screening and Landscaping**:** Surface parking across an alley from a lot in a residential zone is required to have a five foot landscape buffer and six foot height screening along the lot line.

2. SMC 23.47A.024A Residential Amenity Area: Amenity area equal to five percent of the residential gross floor area is required. Applicant requests approximately a 40 percent reduction in the amenity area.

3. SMC 23.54.030D.3. Driveway slope. No portion of a driveway is to exceed a 15% slope. Applicant requests a driveway slope approximating 20%.

4. SMC 23.54.030B.2 Parking Space Ratios. When providing ten or fewer commercial parking spaces, at least 75% of the spaces are required to be large spaces and up to 25% can be small spaces. Applicant requests all small spaces.

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.

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