



City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012667

Address: 1823 18th Avenue, Seattle

Applicant: grouparchitect

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, February 08, 2012

Board Members Present: Evans Bourquard (Chair)
Dawn Bushnaq
Wolf Saar
Chip Wall

Board Members Absent: Lisa Picard

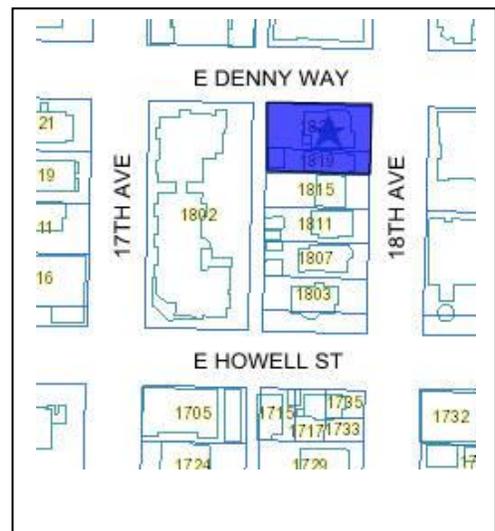
DPD Staff Present: Colin R. Vasquez, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: LR3

Nearby Zones: (North) LR3
(South) LR3
(East) LR3
(West) LR3

Lot Area: 9,614 SF



Current Development: There are two existing single family residences fronting 18th Avenue. There is also one detached garage and surface parking on the site accessed from the alley.

Access: Vehicular access is from the West off the alley.

Surrounding Development: A 3-story early century apartment building to the North; Fortune View Condominiums to the East; A single family residence to the South; and Fred Lind Manor Retirement Home to the West. Diagonally across the intersection of E Denny Way and 18th Avenue (to the Northeast) is a large single family residence which has been divided into multiple units.

ECAs: N/A

Neighborhood Character: The site is located on the Western edge of the Madison-Miller Residential Urban Village, and immediately adjacent to the Capitol Hill Urban Center Village Eastern boundary. The neighborhood predominantly consists of residential structures located due East of the 15th Avenue and the Group Health Campus. E. Madison Street, to the South, is a major bisecting arterial and is a growing dense area with commercial amenities. A variety of residential structures, in both scale and age, are present. Some single-family residences are present, usually in early century structures. Most of the larger early century single family residences have been adapted into multi-family buildings ranging in units from 2 to 8. Three to four story apartment buildings are present. The apartment buildings are extremely varied in scale, age and material use. Scale ranges from half city block to single lot development, age ranges are from early century to 1990's, and material use ranges from traditional brick to stucco. Some institutional use buildings are present throughout the neighborhood and tend to be early century structures.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is for the design and construction of a four to five story residential apartment building with approximately 26-29 residential units located above a subterranean garage. All of the parking (approximately 12-17 stalls) for the proposed development is to be provided in the below grade garage that is accessed from either the alley or 18th Avenue.

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DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Four alternative design schemes were presented.

The first scheme (Option A) showed a ‘code compliant’ option which proposed parking level access from the alley. The parking ramp was contained within the structure along the Southern property line. The massing of the building was divided into thirds creating a courtyard oriented toward the South. The covered parking ramp had a significant impact on the footprint of the courtyard. The massing along 18th Avenue only contained one unit, limiting overall project view potential. No residential uses were proposed at the parking level which created a weak connection between the building and the pedestrian streetscape.

The second scheme (Option B) showed a corner entry at the intersection of E Denny Way and 18th Avenue. Building massing was concentrated toward the West along Denny, the South along 18th, and the Southwest corner of the site. Parking access was proposed from 18th Avenue. The corner faced and engaged the public way and the ground floor courtyard responded to the house to the south.

The third scheme (Option C) showed the building massing concentrated toward the Southern property line. This allowed for the building massing to be modulated significantly along E Denny Way and 18th Avenue. Parking access was proposed from 18th Avenue. This Option featured a courtyard along E Denny Way oriented toward the streetscape.

The fourth scheme (Option D) was the ‘preferred scheme’ and showed building massing concentrated toward the streetscapes along both E Denny Way and 18th Avenue. Parking access was proposed from 18th Avenue. The Option provides a Southwest courtyard visible to public way with entry court along 18th Avenue and a courtyard at the Southwest corner created to allow for substantial replacement of tree removed for proposed development.

BOARD CLARIFYING QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

1. Question: Appreciated number of options investigated but has concern with parking access being taken from 18th Avenue. If parking isn’t required by code, then why should a curb cut along 18th Avenue be allowed? Clarify the DPD review process of the access from 18th allowance.

Planner: Clarification of process.

2. Question: How does the building height compare to the senior housing and the structure across the street?

Architect: The senior housing is 4 stories high and the structure across the street is 3 stories.

3. Question: How does the building height change without a parking plate?

Architect: The height could be calculated in sections instead of by the whole building. The sections further down the slope would have an overall lower calculated building height limit.

4. Question: What is the height of the walls along the sidewalk at E Denny Way?

Architect: About 3' high. The grade along the Northern property line drops approximately 8'. The walls terrace down along the building and step down with the change in grade.

5. Comment: In option D, the parking ramp provided access from the alley could be placed and exposed within the courtyard area.
6. Question: Concern about residential overhang departure at entry. How close is the overhang to the sidewalk?
Architect: The intent is to provide a reasonable weather protecting overhang. The overhang would extend to the property line.
7. Question: Does option C have any departures?
Architect: One, sight triangle non-conformance.
8. Question: In option D, two units are shown along the North. Does the furthest West unit have adequate light access? Could more units be provided along the North?
Architect: Yes, the intent is to grade the area to appropriately provide light access to the units shown.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 25 members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- A member of the public noted the public notice that was mailed to the public did not accurately state the demolition of two existing single family residences or contain the address for the second parcel.
- A member of the public was concerned about length and hours of construction.
- Several members of the public opposed access to the parking level from 18th Avenue. Concerns were raised regarding pedestrian safety and loss of parking along 18th.
- A member of the public was concerned about the overall height calculation and whether the structure should be qualified as a 5 story structure rather than 4 stories.
- A member of the public questioned if the requested departures gave anything back to the community and suggested that an internal courtyard was not enough of a return to the community.
- A member of the public encouraged the architect to do more studies incorporating parking access from the alley.
- A member of the public appreciated the balance of massing shown in option C.
- A member of the public stated that option D was too eclectic in its detailing and massing.
- A member of the public was concerned that the SW courtyard of option D would be compromised if there was future development of the abutting Southern property.
- A member of the public referred to design guideline A-2, streetscape compatibility for color selection and was opposed to the use of bright colors.
- A member of the public referred to design guideline A-6, transition between street and residence and was opposed to the proposed entry overhang departure. The feeling was that the overhang was too urban and did not fit within the neighborhood.

- A member of the public was concerned about site walls being graffiti magnets.
- A couple members of the public were concerned that the project did not provide enough parking.
- Several members of the public stated that the scale of the project was too big and too tall for the neighborhood.
- A member of the public stated that the tallest portion of the building was also on the downhill side of the hill and extremely exposed. In contrast, the condo building across the street has a subterranean level as its first story.
- A member of the public was torn between opposing parking access from 18th and the desire for additional parking within the project.
- A member of the project encouraged the architect to create a more pedestrian friendly streetscape along Denny.
- A member of the public opposed the visibility of the garage door/parking access along 18th.
- A member of the public asked why units couldn't be added to option A along 18th.
- A member of the public opposed the demolition of the single family residences and felt that the character of the residences was irreplaceable.
- A member of the public objected to the project massing.
- A member of the public questioned whether or not the house at 1823 18th was historical.
- A member of the public stated that the project did not match the character of the community.

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.*

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.*
- *For buildings that ... 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 ... should be sensitive to neighboring residential character. While a design with a multi-family character is appropriate along the right-of-ways, compatibility with residential character should be emphasized along the non right-of-ways.*

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.*

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.*

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.*

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.*

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 pourous paving materials to minimize stormwater run-off.*

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.*

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- *Incorporate residential entries and special landscaping into corner lots by setting the structure back from the property lines.*
- *Provide for a prominent retail corner entry.*

B. <u>Height, Bulk and Scale</u>

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.*

Broadway-specific supplemental guidance:

- *Help maintain and enhance the character of Broadway by designing new buildings to reflect the scale of existing buildings.*
- *Masonry and terra cotta are preferred building materials, although other materials may be used in ways that are compatible with these more traditional materials. The Broadway Market is an example of a development that blends well with its surroundings and includes a mixture of materials, including masonry.*
- *The pedestrian orientation of Broadway should be strengthened by designing to accommodate the presence or appearance of small store fronts that meet the sidewalk and where possible provide for an ample sidewalk.*

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.*

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.*

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

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:

- *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 neighborhood.*

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- *Provide entryways that link the building to the surrounding landscape.*
- *Create open spaces at street level that link to the open space of the sidewalk.*
- *Building entrances should emphasize pedestrian ingress and egress as opposed to accommodating vehicles.*
- *Minimize the number of residential entrances on commercial streets where non-residential uses are required. Where residential entries and lobbies on commercial streets are unavoidable, minimize their impact to the retail vitality commercial streetscape.*

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-3 Retaining Walls. *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-4 Design of Parking Lots Near Sidewalks. *Parking lots near sidewalks should provide adequate security and lighting, avoid encroachment of vehicles onto the sidewalk, and minimize the visual clutter of parking lot signs and equipment.*

D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures. *The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape. Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.*

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Consider: pedestrian-scale lighting, but prevent light spillover onto adjacent properties; architectural lighting to complement the architecture of the structure; transparent windows allowing views into and out of the structure—thus incorporating the “eyes on the street” design approach’
- Provide a clear distinction between pedestrian traffic areas and commercial traffic areas through the use of different paving materials or colors, landscaping, etc.

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-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.

E. Landscaping

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

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.

E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions. The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- *Maintain or enhance the character and aesthetic qualities of neighborhood development to provide for consistent streetscape character along a corridor.*
- *Supplement and complement existing mature street trees where feasible.*
- *Incorporate street trees in both commercial and residential environments in addition to trees onsite.*
- *Commercial landscape treatments that include street trees.*

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. Side Setbacks (SMC 23.45.518):** The Code requires 7' average side setbacks with a minimum of 5' setbacks. The applicant proposes an average side setback along E Denny Way of 6'-10" with setbacks ranging from 5' to 21'. In order to respect the Southern residential property and provide a large tree replacement courtyard at the SW corner of the site, project proposes to push building mass toward E Denny Way. Project respects 5' minimum setbacks along Denny, while still providing modulations to relieve the facade elevation. Setbacks along the Southern property line and 18th Avenue are greater than required.

The Board indicated they would be favorable towards the concept of a "minimal" dimensional departure. Especially if the return was for more open space or reduction in massing.

- 2. Roof Overhang Setbacks (SMC 23.45.518.H1):** The Code states eaves and roofs may project into required setbacks a maximum of 4' if they are no closer than 3' to any lot line. The applicant proposes a lobby entry awning to project 5' into the front setback and to the lot line along 18th Avenue. To emphasize the pedestrian entry, project proposes entry building massing up to the 5' street setback line and a 5' deep awning within the setback. The awning would project up to the street lot line along 18th Avenue.

The Board indicated they would entertain a roof overhang departure, but additional information would be needed to review details, material use, and they requested sidewalk perspective studies.

- 3. Maximum Façade Length (SMC 23.45.527.B1):** The Code requires a maximum combined length of all facades within 15' of an interior side lot line shall not exceed 65% of the length of that line. The applicant proposes to exceed the 78' allowed facade length within 15' setback on South lot line. In order to provide a properly sloped parking ramp from the alley

and maintain a viable parking level, the ramp location falls within the 15' setback area. The total length of the ramp is 69'. Total facade length within 15' setback is 84'-8". 24' of that is 5' in height.

The Board indicated they would entertain a departure to the maximum façade length if vehicle access to parking is provided from the alley.

- 4. 15' Garage Door Setback (SMC 23.45.536.D3b):** The Code requires a 15' garage door setback from street facing property lines. The applicant proposes shifting the building massing toward property lines to allow for generous interior and streetscape courtyards. Garage face is set back 9' to 10' instead of 15'.

The Board indicated they would not entertain a departure on this development standard.

- 5. Driveway Sight Triangle (SMC 23.54.030.G1):** The Code requires a 10' by 10' sight triangle at driveways. The applicant proposes that since the driveway entrance is recessed within the structure, the triangle is impacted by the footprint of the building's modulated footprint.

The Board indicated they would entertain a departure/modification to the sight triangle requirements for alley vehicle access.

BOARD DISCUSSION SUMMARY

1. Discussed the parking access from 18th Avenue and questioned the practical use of the placing the garage entry in this location. They felt access from the alley was viable and access from 18th Avenue was not desirable. The alley existing condition promotes a parking use. Even if the neighborhood has existing curb cut conditions, the board not does consider condoning the continuation of a negative context and pattern of development. The zoning allows parking as a use, so the board does not have the purview to dictate whether parking can be part of the development plan or not. However, the board does have purview over how the parking amenity negatively impacts the overall project design.
2. Discussed massing, context, and perceived height. The zoning allows for the massing envelope shown, but the mass should be manipulated in response to the neighborhood scale. They encouraged the architect to make strong scale reductions to the massing, perhaps in building massing step-backs. They encouraged the architect to make a strong material response to the character of the neighborhood.
3. Discussion of concerns with Option D. Increases massing perception by pushing massing toward street. Courtyard could be potentially compromised if there was development on the lot to the South. The primary building circulation facing South is not desirable for the abutting property's privacy and view. Concern about potential blank wall condition along

18th Avenue at the Southeast corner of the parking level. The landscape plan was a positive indication of the intent of screening for the proposed courtyard.

4. Board appreciated the broken up massing of Option C and how the open space was distributed throughout the project. Overall, C responded better to the site than other options. It was recognized that providing a ramp to parking from the alley would be more difficult in option C as currently configured. Encouraged the use of the strategy, shown in Option C, of the strong street-side modulation. Perhaps it can be smaller, entry to building could be along 18th Avenue instead of corner.
5. Requested the Architect provide additional information concerning the sidewalk facing site walls.
6. Encouraged Architect to create a strong connection between the building and streetscape. The building should not put up “barriers”.
7. Encouraged Architect to explore options to provide more units at sidewalk grade by grading down the site between building and sidewalk to sidewalk grade.
8. Encouraged simplified and consistent detailing, especially along the rooflines, cornice treatment, windows. The quieter detailing of Option C in these areas minimizes the attention to the scale of the structure. Detailing throughout the project should be clear and consistent. Eclecticism within the building’s detailing was discouraged.
9. The board would entertain parking departures, such as the width of the ramp, if parking was accessed from the alley.
10. Overall, the board preferred Option A for the alley access, Option C provided the best massing and manipulation of edges, Option D configuration lent itself best to incorporate the alley parking ramp, and more units at ground level was preferred.

BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Locate parking access at alley
2. Reduce the massing
3. Provide architecturally consistent detailing as a response to neighborhood
4. Provide courtyard space throughout site and along streetscape
5. Provide more information about site walls
6. Preferred the massing of Option C and simple rooflines
7. Provide setback of upper levels

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.