



City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development

D. M. Sugimura, Director



INITIAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012837

Address: 1406 East Republican Street

Applicant: John Schack

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, February 06, 2013

Board Members Present: Dawn Bushnaq
Lisa Picard
Wolf Saar
Chip Wall

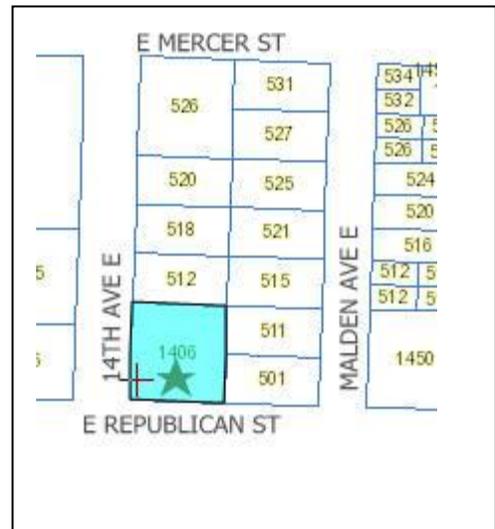
Board Members Absent: Ric Cochrane

DPD Staff Present: Bruce P. Rips

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Lowrise Three (LR3)

Nearby Zones: North: Lowrise zones (LR3 and LR2) extend to Roy St.
 South: LR 3 to John St. which has Neighborhood Commercial Two with a 40 foot height limit (NC2 40) zone.
 East: LR3 extends to 15th Ave E. where there is a NC2 zone Two zone with a 40' height limit in a pedestrian zone (NC2P 40)
 West: LR3 extends to 10th Ave E.



Lot Area: The nearly square 10,183 sq. ft. site sits at the northeast corner of 14th Ave. E. and E. Republican St. in the Capitol Hill Urban Center Village.

Current Development: Three detached cottages front E. Republican St. and a garage sits behind the cottages.

Access: A driveway begins at 14th Ave E. and bisects the site.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character: The site sits upon the crest of Capitol Hill with potential views to the west. The neighborhood commercial corridor along 15th Ave. E. lies two blocks to the east. A Group Health facility is approximately six blocks from the project site. The neighborhood possesses a farrago of housing types (single family, duplex, four-plex and larger apartment buildings). Contemporary structures intermingle with traditional, three to four story brick apartment buildings that seem to anchor the neighborhood. To the northwest on 14th Ave E, Seattle Housing Authority's Capitol Park Apartments rise 11 floors above the street.

ECAs: No mapped Environmentally Critical Areas on the site.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes to design and build a four-story, 36-unit residential structure with partially below grade parking for 22 vehicles.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The applicant's three conceptual schemes all address the idea of a courtyard building partially enclosed by four floors of apartment units. Scheme One presents a west facing courtyard forming a relatively traditional "U" shaped structure in plan. Scheme Two shifts the courtyard to the north/south direction and carves a large two-story opening at the site's southwest corner meant to connect the intersection of the two rights of way with the rectangular void forming the courtyard. In Scheme Three, the direction of the courtyard stretches east/west with a covered two story portal or gateway fronting 14th Avenue East. Schemes Two and Three shift or skew the vertical planes of the west façade and south façade (Scheme Three) off the orthogonal grid. The angling of a vertical plane on the 14th Ave E. side shifts the upper portion back from the street.

The courtyard in the latter two options establishes a shared community amenity at the same time housing an open vertical circulation (stairs) system. In both schemes, the semi enclosed open space leaks out toward the corner of the property, creating the potential for a fluid transition between public and private open space. The applicant favors vehicular access from E. Republican St. which would descend to a parking garage mostly below grade. The parking

garage forms a plinth or podium for the larger building mass that emerges several feet above grade.

By the second EDG meeting, the applicant revised Scheme Three by aligning the elevations with the orthogonal grid, fronting two units onto 14th Ave E., lowering slightly the parking plinth, and enclosing the driveway to underneath the building mass. The courtyard parti, the height, bulk and scale, and the applicant's desire to provide open space at the corner remain similar to the original idea. The two story portal into the courtyard remains similar.

The plans submitted with the MUP application illustrate revisions to the scheme presented at the last EDG meeting. Changes primarily occurred to the organization of the circulation at the edges of the courtyard, modifications to the north façade and refinements of the exterior finishes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Seventeen members of the public affixed their names to the Initial Recommendation meeting sign-in sheet. Those who spoke raised the following concerns.

Height, Bulk and Scale

- The building mass overshadows the buildings to the east and north.
- The massing and height impacts the neighbors to the north. The design isn't compatible.
- The project design does not justify the departure for the façade length.
- It creates a canyon between the houses.
- Set the building further back. All of the wall should be setback.
- In order to lower the building height, minimize the courtyard's size.
- The building is too big.
- It doesn't maximize sunlight on the sidewalk.
- Consider the impact of the shadows on the north side.
- The building exceeds height, bulk and scale. It creates dark corridors with lack of air and light.

Neighborhood Character

- The proposal does not meet Growth Management and city of Seattle Comprehensive Plan expectations for recognizing a neighborhood's historic residential character.
- The project does not respect, augment or enhance the neighborhood character. It does not meet the spirit of the Land Use Code.
- The project does fit well into the neighborhood.
- The design does not respect the single family neighborhood.
- The façade does not provide any scale.
- Guideline A-2. The project does not complement the established streetscape.
- The setbacks are limited and confusing to understand.
- The design is one solid monument and not in keeping with the neighborhood's scale.
- Don't grant the departures especially on the north wall.

- Design the building to resemble the nearby older brick building with a corner garden and entry.

Aesthetics

- The east façade looks like a New York tenement.
- The project lacks any architectural concept.

Landscaping & Rights of Way Issues

- The concrete wall facing the 14th Ave E. frontage is unfriendly.
- The P-Patch will not receive enough natural light.
- The courtyard won't receive adequate light.

Other Issues

- The drawings are inaccurate. They are not to scale.
- There is an insufficient amount of parking.
- Ensure that the site's infrastructure is updated.
- Projects like these are squeezing out single family homes.
- Guideline C-4. The materials are low quality and lack durability.
- The view corridor is a sham. What great view is the project preserving?
- Grant the departures.

DPD received letters and emails. These focused on the departure request for maximum façade length and height, bulk and scale issues. The letters identified specific design review guidelines beyond A-5 and B-1 including sensitivity to human scale (C-3), personal safety (D-7), and landscaping (E-2).

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-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 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.

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

Initial Recommendation: See guidance for A-6.

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.

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.

Initial Recommendation: The Board restated its disinclination to approve the façade length departure due to the over scaled massing on the north elevation. The fourth floor should be setback 15 feet from the property line with the fourth floor one continuous wall east of the portion of the third and fourth floors that projects forward of the cedar siding wall. The north wall lacks sensitivity to the scale of the adjacent residential building. The large windows of the bedrooms on the north side should be scaled down to a more compatible size.

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.

Initial Recommendation: Characterized as awkward and uninviting, the entry sequence from the 14th Ave right of way into the courtyard troubled the Board. A redesign should eliminate the concrete wall for more landscaping, turn the steps 90 degrees to be perpendicular to the west façade, position the gate further into the courtyard and design a more porous appearing gate. These actions ought to create a more welcoming entry into the

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.

Initial Recommendation: By the February Recommendation meeting, the applicant had reorganized the edges of the courtyard to reduce the amount of stairs and upper level exterior walkways impeding into the court. In spite of these efforts, the Board requested that the applicant continue to reduce the visual clutter created by the materials comprising the railings and the walkways. The busyness of the selected materials obstructs the important view created through the courtyard. Staff note: Consider using glass railings, a more planar underside of the walkways, and potentially fewer posts.

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.

Initial Recommendation: See C-5 guidance.

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.

Initial Recommendation: The Board did not request changes to the proposed corner condition.

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.**

Initial Recommendation: In spite of modifications to the massing in response to earlier guidance, the revisions to the north elevation remained problematic for the Board. As the massing relates closely to the departure request for greater façade length along the north side, the Board requested increased depth to the upper level (15 feet from the property line) for the entire length of the north façade east of the two-story projecting bay (see also guidance for A-5) before considering a recommendation of approval for the departure.

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.**

Initial Recommendation: The Board did not specifically address this guideline in its deliberation with the exception of the comments directed to the north elevation.

- 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.

Initial Recommendation: Changes in the vertical plane warrant changes in materials. For the most part, the proposal provides some consistency with this idea; however, on the north and east elevation this doesn't occur. Per guidance from A-5, the upper portion of the fourth floor north façade should be setback 15 feet from the property line with the portion of the grey fiber cement board east of the projecting bay continuous so that the northeast corner does not project forward to meet the cedar siding plane.

On the east elevation, a change in material should represent a dimensional change in the vertical plane.

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.

Initial Recommendation: The design of the two units resembling townhouses facing 14th Ave E. lack warmth and intimacy. The scale matches the larger four story portion of the west façade on the other side of the entry portal. Suggestions by the Board included separating the entries and reducing the size of the apertures. The deep recessed entry, which imitates the larger portal, is unwelcoming. The designer should reduce the scale of this mass yet continue to maintain its relationship to the larger composition.

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.

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.

Initial Recommendation: The Board found the position and the design of the garage door problematic as it lacked a strong kinship to the south façade. The Board recommended that the applicant raise the height of the door, align the door with the bay windows above it, and provide an architectural element that relates to the physical form of the bays or the overall elevation. Simply, the garage door should appear better integrated with the larger elevation.

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.

See Board guidance for the courtyard at A-7. (March 21, 2012)

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.

Initial Recommendation: See guidance for A-6.

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.

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.

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.

Initial Recommendation: Other than requesting additional landscaping adjacent to the building at 14th Ave., the Board did not focus on the proposed landscaping.

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 initial Recommendation meeting, the applicant introduced two departure requests. The Board responded to each of them.

1. **Façade length requirement.** (SMC23.45.527B) The maximum combined length of all portions of facades with 15 feet of a lot line that is neither a rear lot line nor a street or alley lot line shall not exceed 65 percent of the length of that lot line. The applicant proposes a façade length of 74' 1" or 9'9" beyond the code permitted façade length along the north property line.

The Board expressed its disinclination to approve the request. Reiterating earlier guidance, the Board stated that satisfactory modification to the setback or the upper mass must occur. See Board guidance A-5 and B-1.

2. **Garage Door.** (SMC 23.45.536D.3.b) Garage doors facing the street shall be set back at least 15 feet from the street lot line. The applicant requests to set the door seven feet back from the lot line. The Board made suggested several revisions to the garage door and its relationship to the south façade. See guidance C-5.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the Recommendation meeting, the Board recommended the project should return for a 2nd Recommendation meeting.

STAFF NOTE:

Elevations and other drawings should accurately reflect the proposal. Elevation drawings should not be drawn as perspectives.

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