



City of Seattle

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



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012892

Address: 4053 Eighth Avenue Northeast

Applicant: Chaohua Chang

Date of Meeting: March 5th, 2012

Board Members Present: Joe Hurley
Peter Krech
Christina Pizana
Martine Zettle

Board Members Absent: Salone Habibuddin

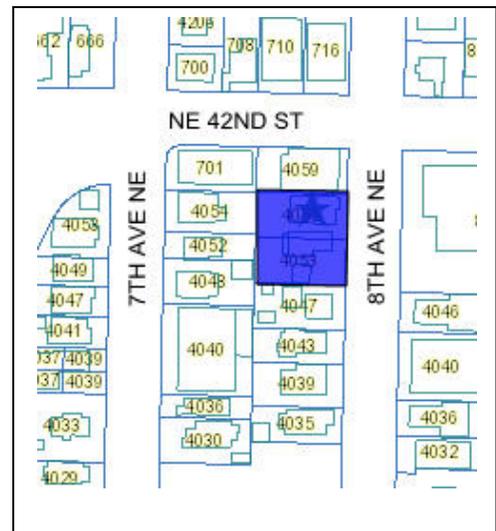
DPD Staff Present: Bruce P. Rips

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Lowrise Three (LR3) in the University District Urban Center Village.

Nearby Zones: North: LR 3
South: LR 3
East: East of 9th Ave NE begins a Commercial One with a 65' height limit (C1 65) zone.
West: West of I-5 begins Single Family 5000 zone (SF 5000).

Lot Area: 10,000 sq. ft.



Current Development: One single family house and one duplex. A detached garage sits on the single family property.

Access: Eighth Avenue NE

Surrounding Development & Neighborhood Character: The University District is a diverse neighborhood with a wide array of building types. The immediate vicinity of the proposal includes single family houses, townhouses and midrise residential buildings. On the same block to the south lie, a rooming house (built in 2009), duplexes and a triplex, University P-patch and a King County Metro facility. An apartment building occupies the lot to the north. The western edge of the University of Washington sits two blocks to the east. Major arterials include NE 45th St. to the north, I-5 a block to the west, and NE 40th to the south.

ECAs: No environmentally critical areas.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes to design and build a four-story, 65-unit residential building with parking for 12 vehicles in a below grade garage. Existing structures to be demolished.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The applicant's three options form variants on traditional courtyard schemes. The first option illustrates a central courtyard wrapped on three sides by an enclosed corridor with units facing outward to the property lines and five levels of units on the west facing the courtyard. These units have a corridor between them and the noise generated by I-5 to the west. An entry lobby on axis connects Eighth Avenue with the central courtyard. Facing Eighth Ave., the east elevation rises five floors and its mass pushes forward to the east property line. The ends of the volume recede at the corners.

The second option forms a progression of open spaces beginning with a covered entry court enclosed on three sides, a large lobby and a sizeable rectangular shaped courtyard open to the west. The western open space extends to the height of the proposed structure. Units to the south of the courtyard face outward away from the open space. Units to the north look into the court capturing southern and western light. The building's mass approaches the Eighth Ave. property line without any significant modulation. Option #3 varies the previous scheme's "C" shaped design with a roughly "H" shaped configuration. A capacious entry courtyard open to the sky is flanked by five levels of residential units. A lobby similar in size to the courtyard permits the possibility of interaction between the court and the lobby/amenity area. Two corridors, flanking the lobby and two units behind it, extend to a small rear deck also open to the sky and facing west. This scheme has greater modulation on all elevations with the exception of the north.

Access to the ten or so parking spaces beneath the structure is the same for each option. The curb cut occurs on the south end of the parcel's Eighth Ave frontage, descends along the south property line and curves into the partially enclosed space. The applicant seeks to inhabit the roof by installing a roof deck, a small garden for the tenant's use and a green roof.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Five members of the public affixed their names to the EDG sign-in sheet. Those who spoke raised the following issues:

- The proposal has too few parking spaces for the amount of units.
- If no parking is provided, students won't bring their cars.
- Townhouses were an inappropriate use for the neighborhood. Apartments and the density achieved by them are better.
- Don't look backward for design precedence.
- An entry courtyard brings noise and security issues. People will congregate in the courtyards facing the streets. Transients also populate the courtyards if there is no security.
- Private courtyards are okay but make them safe.
- Option B is preferred.
- The University District is a difficult to keep secure.
- Useful roof decks are an alternative.
- The L3 zone is difficult to build in and make money. There is more benefit building in an NC zone.

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.

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: The pedestrian-oriented street streetscape is perhaps the most important characteristic to be emphasized in the neighborhood. The University Community identified certain streets as “Mixed Use Corridors”. These are streets where commercial and residential uses and activities interface and create a lively, attractive, and safe pedestrian environment. The Mixed Use Corridors are shown in Map 1. Another important site feature in the University Community is the presence of the Burke Gilman Trail. The primary goal is to minimize impacts to views, sunlight and mixed uses while increasing safety and access along the trail.

The relationship of the proposed structure to the neighbors as rendered in Options B and C seems adequate to the Board. The architect should be sensitive to the privacy of the tenants and the neighbors by ensuring that windows are not aligned.

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

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: Another way to emphasize human activity and pedestrian orientation, particularly along Mixed Use Corridors, is to provide clearly identifiable storefront entries. In residential projects, walkways and entries promote visual access and security.

Guidelines:

- 1. On Mixed Use Corridors, primary business and residential entrances should be oriented to the commercial street.**
- 2. In residential projects, except townhouses, it is generally preferable to have one walkway from the street that can serve several building entrances.**
- 3. When a courtyard is proposed for a residential project, the courtyard should have at least one entry from the street.**
- 4. In residential projects, front yard fences over four (4) feet in height that reduce visual access and security should be avoided.**

The visibility of the entrance from the street is an important consideration. Although the entry court will need to be secure, the court should still exude an openness and direct or clear access from the right of way.

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

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: Pedestrian orientation and activity should be emphasized in the University Community, particularly along Mixed Use Corridors. While most streets feature narrow sidewalks relative to the volume of pedestrian traffic, wider sidewalks and more small

open spaces for sitting, street musicians, bus waiting, and other activities would benefit these areas. Pedestrian-oriented open spaces, such as wider sidewalks and plazas, are encouraged as long as the setback does not detract from the “street wall.”

Guidelines: On Mixed Use Corridors, where narrow sidewalks exist (less than 15’ wide), consider recessing entries to provide small open spaces for sitting, street musicians, bus waiting, or other pedestrian activities. Recessed entries should promote pedestrian movement and avoid blind corners.

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.

The design of the entry court should provide a strong transition between residence and street by forming an outdoor room. The Board reacted favorably to the small east facing court, its transition to the lobby and its connection to the west courtyard.

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

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: There is a severe lack of both public and private open space in the community. Small open spaces—such as gardens, courtyards, or plazas—that are visible or accessible to the public are an important part of the neighborhood’s vision. Therefore, providing ground-level open space is an important public objective and will improve the quality of the residential environment.

Guidelines:

- 1. The ground-level open space should be designed as a plaza, courtyard, play area, mini-park, pedestrian open space, garden or similar occupiable site feature. The quantity of open space is less important than the provision of functional and visual ground-level open space.**
- 2. A central courtyard in cottage or townhouse developments may provide better open space than space for each unit. In these cases, yard setbacks may be reduced if a sensitive transition to neighbors is maintained.**

Considerable deliberation occurred on the configuration of the two courtyards. The architect should develop a hybrid of schemes B and C. The Board finds the circulation and relationship of the courtyards to the lobby in scheme B appealing. The rear (west) courtyard should be the major open space linked by the lobby to the minor open space of the entry court. Both should have amenities for the tenants (seating, garden etc.) as they will be used in different manners during the day and seasons. Option C had qualities that the Board also liked. The entry court, which would be ideally smaller than this option, should be open to the sky similar to Option C rather than partially enclosed

as in Option B. The plan configuration of Option C might work if one of the units between the lobby and the rear deck were shifted allowing direct circulation from entry court to lobby to rear court.

Ground level units facing the west courtyard should have a defined area separate from the courtyard which is for their private use.

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.

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: Buildings in the University Community feature a broad range of building types with an equally broad range of architectural character. Because of the area's variety, no single architectural style or character emerges as a dominant direction for new construction. As an example, the University of Washington campus sets a general direction in architectural style and preference for masonry and cast stone materials, however, new buildings on and off campus incorporate the general massing and materials of this character, rather than replicating it.

Guidelines:

- 1. Although no single architectural style or character emerges as a dominant direction for new construction in the University Community, project applicants should show how the proposed design incorporates elements of the local architectural character especially when there are buildings of local historical significance or landmark status in the vicinity.**
- 2. For areas within Ravenna Urban Village, particularly along 25th Avenue NE, the style of architecture is not as important so long as it emphasizes pedestrian orientation and avoids large-scale, standardized and auto-oriented characteristics.**
- 3. On Mixed Use Corridors, consider breaking up the façade into modules of not more than 50 feet (measured horizontally parallel to the street) on University Way and 100 feet on other corridors, corresponding to traditional platting and building construction.**
- 4. When the defined character of a block, including adjacent or facing blocks, is comprised of historic buildings, or groups of buildings of local historic importance and character, as well as street trees or other significant vegetation (as identified in the 1975 Inventory and subsequent updating), the architectural treatment of new development should respond to this local historical character.**
- 5. Buildings in Lowrise zones should provide a "fine-grained" architectural character.**

The Board observed that the local context did not lend a strong argument for creating a contextual building. The members of the Board urged the architect to design a "forward looking" structure that did not rely on stylistic precedent from neighboring structures.

The City's recent revisions to the Lowrise Code and the availability of new building materials create an opportunity for something new.

- 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.**

The architect's ability to achieve a strong and consistent concept will be among the Board's significant considerations when it reviews the project at the Recommendation meeting.

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

The Board requires detailed drawings of the elevations showing how the large mass has sufficient detail to relate to 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.**

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Guidelines:

- 1. New buildings should emphasize durable, attractive, and well-detailed finish materials, including: Brick; Concrete; Cast stone, natural stone, tile; Stucco and stucco-like panels; Art tile; Wood.**
- 2. Sculptural cast stone and decorative tile are particularly appropriate because they relate to campus architecture and Art Deco buildings. Wood and cast stone are appropriate for moldings and trim.**
- 3. The materials listed below are discouraged and should only be used if they complement the building's architectural character and are architecturally treated for a specific reason that supports the building and streetscape character: Masonry units; Metal siding; Wood siding and shingles; Vinyl siding; Sprayed-on finish; Mirrored glass.**
- 4. Where anodized metal is used for window and door trim, then care should be given to the proportion and breakup of glazing to reinforce the building concept and proportions.**
- 5. Fencing adjacent to the sidewalk should be sited and designed in an attractive and pedestrian oriented manner.**
- 6. Awnings made of translucent material may be backlit, but should not overpower neighboring light schemes. Lights, which direct light downward, mounted from the awning frame are acceptable. Lights that shine from the exterior down on the awning are acceptable.**
- 7. Light standards should be compatible with other site design and building elements.**

Signs

Context: The Citywide Design Guidelines do not provide guidance for new signs. New guidelines encourage signs that reinforce the character of the building and the neighborhood.

Guidelines:

1. The following sign types are encouraged, particularly along Mixed Use Corridors – Pedestrian oriented shingle or blade signs extending from the building front just above pedestrians; Marquee signs and signs on pedestrian canopies; Neon signs; Carefully executed window signs; such as etched glass or hand painted signs; Small signs on awnings or canopies.
2. Post mounted signs are discouraged.
3. The location and installation of signage should be integrated with the building's architecture.
4. Monument signs should be integrated into the development, such as on a screen wall.

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.

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: The University Community would like to encourage, especially on Mixed Use Corridors, the provision of usable, small open spaces, such as gardens, courtyards, or plazas that are visible and/or accessible to the public. Therefore, providing ground-level open space is an important public objective and will improve the quality of both the pedestrian and residential environment.

Guidelines:

1. On Mixed Use Corridors, consider setting back a portion of the building to provide small pedestrian open spaces with seating amenities. The building façades along the open space must still be pedestrian-oriented.
2. On Mixed Use Corridors, entries to upper floor residential uses should be accessed from, but not dominate, the street frontage. On corner locations, the main residential entry should be on the side street with a small courtyard that provides a transition between the entry and the street.

See guidance for A-7.

- 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.

The solid waste storage area should not front onto Eighth Ave. as shown in Options A and C. The Board prefers a dwelling unit in this location.

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

Re-emphasizing public comments, the Board requests that the entry courtyard be secure. The court should be visible from the street but remain safe.

A lighting plan should be submitted at the time of the MUP and presented at the Recommendation meeting.

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.

The two courtyards should be well landscaped and accommodate a variety of tenant uses. The entry court ought to be gracious and welcoming with seating and a strong visible connection to the street.

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 applicant did not request a departure.

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.