



# City of Seattle

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



## INITIAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012892

Address: 4053 Eighth Avenue Northeast

Applicant: Chaohua Chang

Date of Meeting: September 10, 2012

Board Members Present: Salone Habibuddin  
Peter Krech  
Christina Pizana  
Martine Zettle

Board Members Absent: Joe Hurley

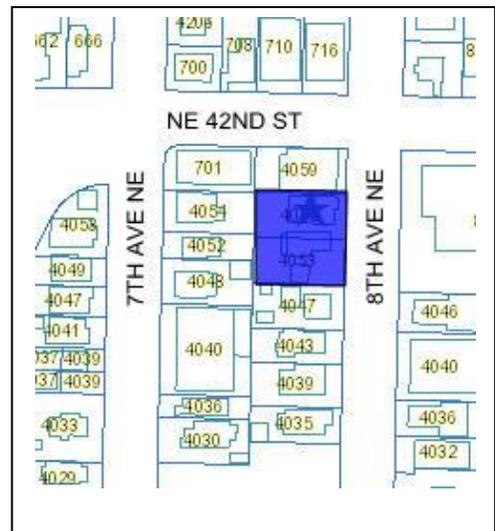
DPD Staff Present: Bruce P. Rips

### 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 9<sup>th</sup> 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. To the south at 4039 8th Ave NE another multifamily project (3013403) is under review by DPD.

ECAs: No environmentally critical areas.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicant proposes to design and build a four-story, 60-unit residential building with parking for 10 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.

By the Recommendation meeting, the applicant had refined the design in particular the sequence of outdoor and indoor common areas.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

One member of the public affixed their names to the Recommendation sign-in sheet. No one spoke during the public comment period.

## **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.**

See Board's C-1 guidance below for the south facing windows.

**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.**

See the discussion of the copper canopy under guidance C-2.

**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 Board praised the revisions to the open spaces and their flow or sequence from one to another.

The architect and landscape architect ought to contact SDOT to decide whether the planter boxes in the right of way (adjacent to the sidewalk) will be allowed.

**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.

The Board expressed its appreciation of how well the architect responded to its earlier suggestions regarding the indoor and outdoor common areas.

**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. 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.
3. Buildings in Lowrise zones should provide a "fine-grained" architectural character.

The spacing of the south and north facing windows conveyed the architect's sensitivity to the neighbors' privacy. The Board, noting the substantial distance between the proposed

south façade and the adjacent structure, urged the addition of windows for two of the corner units.

- 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 Board questions the consistency of several elements of the design. The curve of the canopy appears unrelated to any other design element of the design. Should the architect desire to keep the canopy shape, he should relate it to another element of the overall design. The Board wants to see a detail of how rain is captured by the canopy (i.e. a gutter) so that it does not pour on people entering and exiting the building. Copper weathers and changes color. Show the canopy's appearance once it ages.

The diagonal struts on the balconies lack consistency with the other architectural elements and appears dated. The Board asks the architect to reconsider the design.

The sunscreens act as both a functional element and as an aesthetic device emphasizing the building's horizontality. The Board urges the architect to limit the application of the metal sunscreens to the areas above the windows.

The Board also questions the logic of the vertical fin on the east elevation but had not specifically request a change.

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

Noting its discomfort with the detailing or relationship of materials with one another, the Board requests explicit drawings on how these materials join with one another. The schematic nature of the elevations did not provide enough information on how the materials relate.

- 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 location and installation of signage should be integrated with the building's architecture.
2. Monument signs should be integrated into the development, such as on a screen wall.

The Board notes the lack of a color and materials board. Provide a materials board at the next meeting. The Board also observes that without better detailing the limestone base could look pasted on rather than an integral part of the elevations.

## 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.**

**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 change in location of the solid waste storage area from fronting onto 8<sup>th</sup> Ave NE to behind one of the units met with the Board’s approval.

The Board noted the harshness of the laundry room due to its size, lack of windows, and location with the garage. The architect ought to consider integrating the laundry room for this 60 unit apartment into the life of the building.

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

In order to ensure building security, the Board suggests 1) installing fencing along the lower portion of the driveway to prevent people wandering into the rear open space and 2) placing a gate between the north property line and the northeastern most unit.

The Board did not think it necessary to provide security fencing around the entry patio.

<b>E. Landscaping</b>
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**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 proposed landscaping design received praise. However, the Board requested that the fencing along the perimeter of the site be changed from a cyclone or chain link to one possessing better quality and nicer design. Other types of fencing will accommodate vines.

The size of the roof deck appears larger than the occupancy that one stair access will allow. The architect should consult the building code. Building code experts are also available to review this design at DPD’s public resource center. Instead of using fencing as means to achieve the department’s green factor requirement, portions of the roof (i.e. green roof) may be used to meet this zoning regulation.

The Board notes the placement of a tree in a landscaping drawing in front of the fin.

**DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

The applicant has not requested a departure.

**BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the Recommendation meeting, the Board requested the project should return for a second Recommendation meeting.

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