



City of Seattle

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



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012897

Address: 1105 E. Fir St.

Applicant: John Baldauf

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, February 15, 2012

Board Members Present: Evan Bourquard (Chair)
Clint Keithley
Lisa Picard
Chip Wall

Board Members Absent: Dawn Bushnaq
Wolf Saar

DPD Staff Present: Shelley Bolser

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: MR

Nearby Zones: North: MR
South: NC3P-65
East: NC3P-65 and NC3-65
West: LR3

Lot Area: 53,714 square feet



Current Development: 40 apartments for transitional housing

Access: Surface parking adjacent to the paved street surface on E. Fir Street

Surrounding Development: Single family residences are located to the east and north. Vacant parcels are also located to the east and north. Multi-family apartments are located to the north, west, and southwest. A restaurant is located to the south across E. Yesler Way. Horihuchi Park is located to the north.

ECAs: None

The site is located near the future streetcar line on E. Yesler Way and Boren Avenue. Boren Avenue is a fast-moving busy arterial. E. Yesler Way is a lower traffic arterial. E. Fir Street dead-ends at Boren Ave and is a quiet residential street. The 12th Avenue corridor is located one block to the east, with growing commercial development. Bailey Gatzert Elementary school is located on block to the south.

Neighborhood Character: The building typology in this area is varied, with a combination of low to mid-rise apartments of varying ages, older single family structure, older single story commercial development, and medical and office uses. Architectural character is varied. The applicant provided some examples of nearby context in the EDG packet.

Yesler Terrace is located to the west across Boren Ave. The Yesler Terrace development is in review for a Master Planned Community designation over 30 acres with the potential for 5,000 apartments, 900,000 square feet of office space, 65,000 square feet of neighborhood services, 88,000 square feet of retail, 15.9 acres of open space, and 5,100 parking spaces. Build out could occur over a period of 15-20 years. The draft plan indicates 6-story multi-family buildings facing Boren Avenue, across from this site.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: February 15, 2012

The EDG packet includes materials presented at the EDG meeting, and is available online by entering the project number at this website:

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp.

or contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

Address: Public Resource Center
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
Seattle, WA 98124

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for one six-story building and three buildings with townhouses, containing a total of 100 residential units. Parking for 60 vehicles would be located in structured and below grade parking, accessed from E. Fir Street. The existing structures are proposed to be demolished

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 12 members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- The 12th Avenue Urban Village is located nearby, with a focus on increasing commercial development along 12th Avenue. The proposed development should provide a strong pedestrian design on E. Fir Street, since people will use that street to access 12th Avenue from Boren Avenue.
- Enhance the pedestrian connection between Boren Avenue and E. Fir Street. It will be heavily used by people getting off the bus on Boren Ave. Will the connection have stairs to address the grade change?
 - Response: yes, there will be stairs. Currently it's an informal steep dirt path.
- Enhance privacy for the residents at grade on Boren Ave and the northwest corner adjacent to the pedestrian connection to E. Fir St.
- Appreciation for recessing the common space and setting it back from the noise of Boren Ave.
- Is 11th Ave vacated under this site?
 - Response: yes, it was vacated in the 1940's.
- Visually break up the building mass on E. Fir St
- Appreciation for the design concept.
- Provide more parking in the building, concerns about traffic
 - Response: please contact the Land Use Planner directly with those comments.

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.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE:

1. The Board approved of the preferred massing scheme.
 - a. The setbacks and landscaping at the street are less urban in nature, but seem to be a good response to the challenge of the noise and movement of the busy arterial at Boren Ave.
 - b. The south edge with the smaller buildings, interesting roof forms, and pedestrian connection is a positive aspect of the design.
 - c. The ability for residents to walk at grade from E. Fir St through the building across to the south corner and to the bus stop on Boren Ave is a positive aspect of the proposal.

- d. Enhance the proposed design approach to grade changes, with low retaining walls and landscaping to allow visual connection into the site from the Boren Ave sidewalk.
 - e. The building mass and vehicular access at the north edge is a challenge.
2. North edge (E. Fir St):
- a. The north edge will need design modification to reduce the appearance of mass and enhance the pedestrian experience at the street level.
 - b. Use large voids and large modulation changes to reduce the scale. Avoid building extrusions that increase the sense of bulk and scale at the north façade.
 - c. Rearrange upper building mass to reduce shadow impacts and reduce the scale on the north edge.
 - d. Two curb cuts flanking the main pedestrian entry at E. Fir St are problematic. Combine curb cuts if possible, and minimize the appearance of the garage entries and the interruption of the pedestrian environment on E. Fir St. This relates to the proposed departures.
 - e. The design of the streetscape and north façade at E. Fir Street should include a strong emphasis on enhancing the pedestrian connection from Boren Ave to 12th Ave. Use human scaled façade treatments at the street level.
 - f. It's unclear if the parking levels would be visible above grade. Avoid blank walls at the street level.
3. Entry:
- a. The primary pedestrian entry to the site is at E. Fir St. Emphasize the visual and physical connection from E. Fir St to the interior courtyard.
 - b. Use the building entry design to reduce the appearance of scale on the north façade.
 - c. The entry should be designed to convey a 'sense of arrival' to the site, even though this is the quietest street adjacent to the site.
 - d. Consider locating the entry and a visual break in the north façade to respond to the intersection of 11th Avenue.
4. Architectural concept:
- a. Design the large building with large scalar moves to reduce the appearance of building mass, at both the north edge and the facades facing the interior courtyard.
 - b. Design the smaller buildings with bold design emphasis, such as the interesting roof forms shown in the packet, in order to relate to the scale of the large buildings.
 - c. The examples shown on page 22 of the packet demonstrate this EDG direction.
 - d. The proposed development should include quality materials with a long life span.

At the Recommendation meeting, the applicant should provide graphics and text to demonstrate the response to the Early Design Guidance. The Board specifically requested the following additional information at the Recommendation meeting:

1. Demonstrate how the parking levels will relate to the pedestrian streetscape. Include sections, plans, elevations, landscape plans, perspectives, and any other information needed to demonstrate this response.

2. Provide floor plans and sections demonstrating the proposed parking levels in relation to the street, courtyard, and interior building spaces.
3. Provide street level elevations and perspectives with particular focus on E. Fir St.

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The Board identified the following Citywide Design Guidelines of highest priority for this project.

- 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.
- A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street.** Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.
- A-4 Human Activity.** New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.
- A-7 Residential Open Space.** Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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-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-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.

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. Screening by Garage Doors (23.45.536.D.3.a):** The Code requires that garage doors are limited to a maximum of 75 square feet each. The applicant proposes a 90 square foot garage door at one curb cut and two 90 square foot garage doors at the other curb cut. This is in response to the need for van accessibility into the garage, and sufficient garage door width at the two-way driveway.

The Board was concerned about the proposed departure's effect on the pedestrian focus and primary building entry at E. Fir St, as described in Guidance item #2.d. The Board advised combining the curb cuts to a single point of entry. The Board also directed the applicant to minimize the impact of the vehicle access on the building entry and pedestrian focus of E. Fir St.

- 2. Structure Width and Depth Limits (23.45.528):** The Code requires maximum building width of 150 feet. The applicant proposes a 213 foot building width at the north property line.

The Board was concerned about the height bulk and scale impacts of this departure on the pedestrian environment and streetscape at E. Fir St. The applicant should design this façade in response to Guidance items 2 and 3, with specific attention to Guidelines A-2 and B-1.

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.