



# City of Seattle

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



## FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012897

Address: 1105 E. Fir St.

Applicant: John Baldauf

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, June 13, 2012

Board Members Present: Wolf Saar (Chair)  
Dawn Bushnaq  
Ric Cochrane  
Chip Wall  
Boting Zhang

Board Members Absent: Lisa Picard

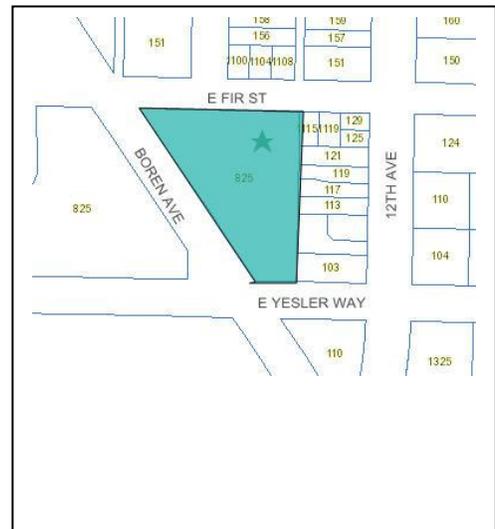
DPD Staff Present: Shelley Bolser and Lindsay King

### 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. Horiuchi Park is located to the north.

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.

## 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.

<b>EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: February 15, 2012</b>
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The packet includes materials presented at the 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](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](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

- The 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue Urban Village is located nearby, with a focus on increasing commercial development along 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The proposed development should provide a strong pedestrian design on E. Fir Street, since people will use that street to access 12<sup>th</sup> 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 11<sup>th</sup> 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.

<b>FINAL RECOMMENDATION MEETING: June 13, 2012</b>
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The packet includes materials presented at the Recommendation 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](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp).

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At the Recommendation meeting, the applicant noted that the corners have been eroded in response to the EDG, and the revised design also provides diagonal alignment of the entry through the lobby to the courtyard.

The garage entry is located on the northeast corner with ramping on the east property line. A second curb cut provides access to an ADA van space. A departure is proposed for the size of the ADA van space garage door to accommodate an ADA van. Another departure is requested to bring the garage door closer to the street front to reduce blind corners. A decorative art panel is proposed over this garage door. Parallel parking will be maintained on E. Fir St.

The applicant noted that SDOT has been supportive of the curvilinear sidewalks on Boren Ave and very supportive of the pedestrian path across the northwest corner of the site.

The landscape plan is based on a 'streams and eddies' concept, with curvilinear paths and nodes with seating areas. Larger open areas include a play area and a 'passive meadow' with edible landscaping. Cascading landscape planters would be planted with low landscaping for clear sight lines at the north façade. A green roof would be located on the primary residential entry canopy, with benches at the entry. Two green roofs open spaces are proposed at the ends of the taller building. Mature and exceptional trees would be retained at the west and north sides of the site. The townhouses at the south edge would include low walls and landscaping to provide a psychological barrier but maintain a visual connection with the street frontage.

Materials include cementitious siding, with a white color used at the greatest recesses in the façade, yellow panels in some protrusions, and green 8" lap siding at other protrusions. Accent colors of red and blue would be used for front doors, with a slightly lighter tone for the porch soffit and underside of the eaves. Artistic metal or translucent patterned resin panel concepts were shown as possibilities for the sliding ADA van door.

Departures related to the ADA van space, a sight triangle at the northeast corner to preserve the existing tree at that corner, and structure width.

The structure width departure is for a wider building width on the north at E. Fir St, with less than maximum building width on the east, west, and south façades. A combination of modulation, articulation, and colors/material textures would be used to reduce the appearance of width at the north façade.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- 12<sup>th</sup> Ave will become the area's primary commercial street and pedestrian destination, so the E. Fir St frontage should provide a pedestrian friendly design between Boren Ave and 12<sup>th</sup> Ave.
- Question whether human scale façade treatments are employed at the street level
- Appreciates the potential view from the sidewalk through the entry to the courtyard and it should be enhanced to create a sense of arrival
- Appreciates the ability to walk through the site from the townhouses to Fir St.

## 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 (FEBRUARY 15, 2012):

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 12<sup>th</sup> 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 11<sup>th</sup> 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.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS (JUNE 13, 2012):**

### Defensible space

- 1. Parking access area needs to be designed for personal safety, per the recommended condition described below – clear sight lines, lighting, eyes on the area, etc. (A-1, A-2, A-7, D-5, D-7)
- 2. The applicant indicated that the ADA van space has been revised to address the slope, but the Board noted some concern with the lack of clear information and recommended a condition to demonstrate adequate sight lines and design for personal safety. (A-8, D-7)
- 3. The open space for the townhouses at E. Yesler Way need clear separation from the street. (D-12)
  - a. This may include further setback from the E. Yesler Way property line, additional wall or fence height, additional landscaping, trees to buffer the yards from E. Yesler Way, etc.

### Departures (Height, Bulk, Scale and Human Scale, materials)

- 1. The concepts of midrise shown on page 12 include large moves and fine grain interiors. (B-1, C-2, C-3, C-4)
  - a. The Board appreciated the large modulation gesture and use of color to enhance the design concept.
  - b. The details such as reglets, location of through wall flashing, corner boards, finish details may achieve the fine grain needed within the different colors/strategies.

- c. The differences in the material textures don't seem significant enough to give the fine grain concept shown on page 12.
  - d. Larger windows or varied window sizes should be used to emphasize the fine grain within the larger scale moves.
  - e. The simple design concept and treatment is good, but the finishing details need to be finely detailed to give a sophisticated and finished appearance.
  - f. The midrise building photos on page 12 show the purposeful moves of fine grain, fine scale.
  - g. Photo 2 of townhouses is the best example of the details that are needed with corner board strategies, window hierarchies, etc.
  - h. The Board recommended a condition related to refining the fine grain design of the facades.
2. The departures are acceptable, subject to the recommended conditions.

### Entry

- 1. The Board recommended a condition to revise the entry design. (A-3, D-12)
  - a. The entry feels utilitarian and minimal for the scale of the façade.
  - b. The design of the steel canopy with round columns should be revised to feel more welcoming for residents returning home, with clear open spaces and appropriate lighting.
  - c. The entry needs to be strongly expressed in the vertical mass to make it visible from Boren Ave. This can also be used to improve the design concept of the north façade and reduce the bulk and scale at E. Fir St.
- 2. The Board strongly supported emphasizing the visual connection through to the courtyard. (A-4, A-7, C-2, D-12)

Landscape: The Board noted that the landscape plan is well thought out and will enhance the building design, with the exception of the moss on the roof canopy. (E-2 and E-3)

The DPD Planner will consult with the Board Chair after the design response to conditions is received from the applicant, to ensure that the response meets the intent of the Board's recommended conditions.

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

**1. Garage Doors – maximum area (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.

This departure would provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines A-2 and A-8 by minimizing the continuous width of garage doors at the E. Fir St façade, and by providing a visually interesting material on the garage door visible from E. Fir St.

The Board unanimously recommended that DPD grant the departure, subject to the conditions listed below.

**2. Garage Doors - setback (23.45.536.D.3.b):** The Code requires that garage doors are set back at least 15' from the street facing lot line. The applicant proposes to locate the ADA van garage door at 12'10-1/2" from the E. Fir St property line, flush with the building facade.

This departure would provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines A-8 and D-7 by enhancing clear sight lines, and by providing a visually interesting material on the garage door visible from E. Fir St.

The Board unanimously recommended that DPD grant the departure, subject to the conditions listed below.

**3. Driveway slope (23.54.030.D.3):** The Code requires a maximum driveway slope of 15%. The applicant proposes a 20% driveway slope at the east driveway providing a short one-way access to enter the garage.

This departure would provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines A-2 and A-8 by minimizing the continuous width of garage doors at the E. Fir St façade, and would be consistent with SDOT requirements.

The Board unanimously recommended that DPD grant the departure, subject to the conditions listed below.

- 4. Sight triangles (23.54.030.G.1):** The Code requires sight triangles on either side of a 2-way driveway. The applicant proposes to retain a tree located in the sight triangle at the east edge of the property.

This departure would provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines A-5 and E-3 by retaining an existing mature tree on site and maintaining screening for adjacent neighbors from the driveway.

The Board unanimously recommended that DPD grant the departure, subject to the conditions listed below.

- 5. Structure Width Limits (23.45.528.A):** The Code requires maximum building width of 150 feet. The applicant proposes a 215'5" foot building width at the north property line.

This departure would provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines A-1, A-7, and B-1 by responding to the triangular shape of the lot, modulating and articulating the north façade, and providing additional usable space at the interior of the site.

The Board unanimously recommended that DPD grant the departure, subject to the conditions listed below.

- 6. Structure Width and Depth Limits (23.45.528.B.1):** The Code requires maximum structure depth of 75% of the lot depth. The applicant proposes a structure depth of 79% of the lot depth.

This departure would provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines A-1, A-7, and B-1 by responding to the triangular shape of the lot, modulating and articulating the north façade, and providing additional usable space at the interior of the site.

The Board unanimously recommended that DPD grant the departure, subject to the conditions listed below.

## **BOARD RECOMMENDATION**

The recommendation summarized below was based on the design review packet dated June 13, 2012 and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the June 13, 2012 Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and initial recommendation conditions, and reviewing the plans and renderings, the five Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design and the requested development standard departure from the requirements of the Land Use Code (listed above). The Board recommended the following CONDITIONS (Authority referred in the letter and number in parenthesis):

1. Demonstrate that the garage entry, the ADA van garage entry, and northeast corner is designed for safety using techniques such as clear sight lines, adequate lighting, mirrors, etc. The departure to save the tree is warranted, but the vehicular entry needs to be designed for personal safety. (A-8, D-7)
2. Demonstrate graphically that the south end of the property is designed to provide defensible spaces for residents. (D-12)
3. Demonstrate how the finishing details (such as corner boards, through wall flashing, upper level canopies, townhouse porch columns) are finely detailed to give a sophisticated and finished appearance. (B-1, C-2, C-3, C-4)
4. Revise the entry to give a true sense of arrival, revise the canopy/lighting/detail to emphasize quality and richness, and the entry shall be vertically expressed and consistent with the building scale on the north façade (A-3, D-12)
5. Provide a lighting plan and demonstrate that the light fixtures are consistent with the architectural design and the lighting plan provides safety and security for residents through site. (A-7, D-1)