



City of Seattle

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



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012956

Address: 12350 33RD AVE. N.E.

Applicant: CARON ARCHITECTURE

Date of Meeting: Monday, April 02, 2012

Board Members Present: PETER KRECH (Chair)
JOE HERLEY
SALONE HABIBUDDIN
CHRISTINA PIZANA
MARTIN ZETTLE

Board Members Absent: None

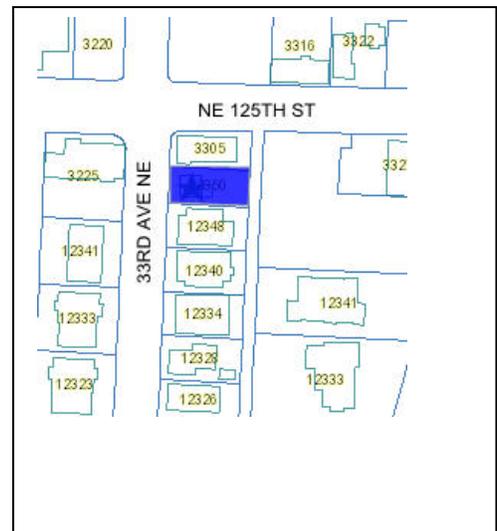
DPD Staff Present: SCOTT KEMP

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: NC2-40

Nearby Zones: North: NC2-40
South: LR-3
East: NC2-40
West: NC2-40

Lot Area: 5,500 SF



Current Development: SINGLE FAMILY

Access: Improved alley to the east.

Surrounding Development: Adjacent office building on north site, MF development on adjacent southern property

ECAs: Riparian ECA area across alley to the east.

Neighborhood Character: Mixture of commercial and multifamily properties, ages 1960-2000.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is for the design and construction of a 4 story apartment building with 24 residential units. The ground floor includes a residential lobby, a commercial live/work unit facing 33rd Ave. N.E., along with 5 residential units. The square footage of each floor is approximately 3,850 sf. Four parking spaces are to be provided on the east side of the site, “tucked” under the building overhang, with an alley access.

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| EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: April 2, 2012 |
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DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Three alternative design schemes were presented

The first scheme (Option A) showed interior courtyard with maximum FAR. This scheme required setback departures.

The second scheme (Option B) showed multiple units facing the street, but minimal amenity space on the ground plan.

The third scheme (Option C) showed the preferred scheme which included ample open space on the south side of the site. This allowed better daylighting for residential units, greater setback/separation to the neighbor to the south (LR-3 zoning), and visual connection to the riparian area to the east of the site.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 3 members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Encouraged that west elevation to have more modulation and glazing/openings.
- Concerned with whether the proposed residential units would be rented at market rates or subsidized.

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.

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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed that the site slopes 10 feet due east to alley, beyond which is an open space with a wetland area and riparian corridor associated with Thornton Creek.. It supported the site development plans showing a 15 foot wide landscape buffer visually connecting through the site to the wetland area across the alley to the east.

Parking provided on the east side of the site could be tucked under the building – taking advantage of sloped site and the public alley. The Board supported the preferred scheme with a 15ft setback with green amenity space as visual corridor connecting the street to the existing Thornton creek. The setback should be landscaped so as to increase privacy and separation between the site and the adjacent site to the south.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed that the residential entry will be accessed off of the main street, with its own canopy and prominent indication via material use. The board indicated that the residential entry should read as the entry to the building with light and transparency into the lobby area. The Board praised the commercial appearing live-work spaces, and indicated that the success of the side, lower

level, entry to the live work space will depend on the how well it is executed in design and materials.

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.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board indicated that the 15 foot deep amenity area should be designed with security in mind. Lighting, visibility and the nature of pedestrian paths should all reflect this concern in addition to showing a relation to the riparian area to the east and buffering the multifamily building to the south.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board indicated it was not highly concerned about the appearance of height, bulk and scale while stating that it still deserves some consideration in the design; especially to the north and northwest where a wall to the full height of the building would be placed along the property line.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board stated the design elements, details and massing are well designed and defined. The board suggested more fenestration on both East and West facades, especially at the corners. It was stated there could be “more major and a little more minor” in the expression of elements of the east and west facades. It stated there is an opportunity for more playful moves on the west façade which could include bays or sunshades.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed that the project already has a ground level treatment which addresses the need for 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed that in general the material choice and application are good. The board wants to see the actual palette and treatment of north wall (blank wall).

D. Pedestrian Environment

- D-2 Blank Walls. Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the blank wall facing north needs to have well defined material palette and application. This façade is along the property line will eventually be hidden by new development. However, that date is uncertain and in the foreseeable future it will be visible, necessitating tasteful treatment.

- 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the location of dumpsters and utilities. The project proposes all utilities will be secured, screened and access from the alley. The board agreed this was reasonable location.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed that the 15 ft. setback amenity area should be secured and have controlled access.

D-9 Commercial Signage. Signs should add interest to the street front environment and should be appropriate for the scale and character desired in the area.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board indicated that the project needs to have attractive and desirable commercial signage with an appropriate weighting of residential verses commercial.

D-10 Commercial Lighting. Appropriate levels of lighting should be provided in order to promote visual interest and a sense of security for people in commercial districts during evening hours. Lighting may be provided by incorporation into the building façade, the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, in landscaped areas, and/or on signage.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed that the lighting strategy should be designed further and that the residential entry is an especially important element to get right.

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| E. Landscaping |
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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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed that privacy issues on the 15 ft. setback should be addressed with planting, trellises and/or screen walls in a manner which screens the base level of the structure to the south. The use of native species and the overall landscape design should be used to tie the landscape into existing Thornton Creek wetland area across the alley.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board affirmed the proponents plan to respond to and tie into the riparian area to the east.

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. Residential use on street facade (SMC 23.47A.005.C2c):** The Code requires maximum 20% of residential use on street façade. The applicant proposes 37% (13ft) of residential use (entry) on street façade.

The Board indicated it thinks this departure would result in a building façade with residential and commercial frontages appropriately distributed and indicated it's preliminary support for the proposed 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.