City of Seattle

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

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number:	3013026
Address:	4119 & 4123 12th Ave NE
Applicant:	Michael Godfried of Nicholson Kovalchick Architects
Date of Meeting:	Monday, March 12, 2012
Board Members Present:	Peter Krech (Chair) Joe Hurley Martine Zettle
Board Members Absent:	Salone Habibudden Christina Pizana
DPD Staff Present:	Shelley Bolser, substituting for Lisa Rutzick

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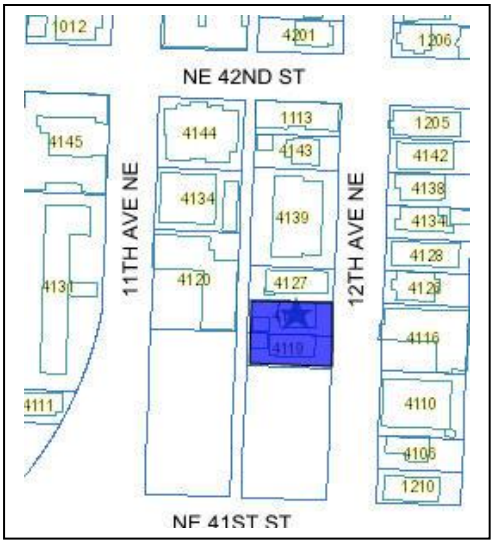
SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Midrise (MR)

Nearby Zones: (North) MR
(South) MR
(East) MR
(West) MR

Lot Area: 8,240 square feet in size, rectangular in shape, and sloping from north to south with a grade change of 5’



Current Development:	Two single family residences with detached garages. An exceptional street tree (London plane or Sycamore) is located within the 12th Ave NE public right of way. Another smaller non-exceptional street tree is also located within the same public right of way.
Access:	From the alley
Surrounding Development:	The project site is directly adjacent to a large dormitory building recently completed by the University of Washington that is part of a larger complex of dormitory buildings that are still under construction. Other mid-rise height dormitory and institutional buildings are located to the south and east. Lowrise height apartments and single family residences are located to the west.
ECAs:	None
Neighborhood Character:	The site is located within the University District, which is largely comprised of mid-size to large apartment/condominium buildings, dormitory buildings and other University of Washington institutional developments as well as townhomes and single family homes. Several commercial pockets and streets are located north and east of the project. University Way NE, which is located two blocks east of the project, is a major arterial with a variety of shops and eateries. NE Campus Parkway is located one block to the south of the project. I-5 is located several blocks to the west The site is within walking distance of the University of Washington campus.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed development is a 7-story building with 103 residential units and no vehicular parking. Bicycle parking would be located below grade inside the building. The applicant proposes a building configuration in response to retaining the large London plane tree.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: March 12, 2012

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

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.

The EDG packet is also available to view in the 3012848 EDG file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

Mailing Address: **Public Resource Center**
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

PUBLIC COMMENT

Four members of the public signed in at this Early Design Guidance meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Appreciation that the largest street tree will be retained
- Consider additional setback at the alley to provide for additional vehicular circulation in the alley
- The combination of hedges and the street tree at the front of the building may hide the residential entry
- Adequate loading areas for those moving in and out of the building are needed.

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.

Guideline: For properties facing the Burke Gilman Trail, new buildings should be located to minimize impacts to views of Mount Rainier, Cascade Mountains and Lake Washington, and allow for sunlight along the trail and increase safety and access for trail users.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the importance of the large London plane tree in the public right of way. The tree has been defined as exceptional and it is a street tree, which is within the purview of Seattle Department of Transportation. The other street tree is not exceptional and SDOT has indicated support for removal of that tree.

The proposed building entry and front façade will need to be designed in consideration of the large London plane street tree. This tree is approximately 75' tall and will match or exceed the height of the proposed building. The applicant is working within this consideration, and has proposed departures to maximize the health of the tree. The proposed departures to enhance the tree health are encouraged, but the applicant will also need to demonstrate that the proposed departures better meet the intent of the Design Review Guidelines, including A-3, C-2 and C-3.

A-3 <u>Entrances Visible from the Street</u>. 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the relationship of the street tree to the front façade, as described in response to Guideline A-1. The Board directed the applicant to pay special attention to the treatment of the residential entry to enhance the visibility, safety, and direct connection of the entry to the sidewalk.

The applicant should revise the northeast corner of the building to provide a true residential entry visible from the street front.

The Board suggested extending the entry canopy around the corner to cover a front corner entry, recessing the front corner entry, providing a highly transparent storefront system for the entry corner, and moving the leasing office space further to the south to accommodate a true residential entry to the building. The front corner entry should be the primary building entrance.

A side entry may work as a secondary entry, but should be well-lit, covered for weather protection, and secondary in the hierarchy of entries to the building.

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.

Early Design Guidance reflects the response to Guideline A-3.

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.

Early Design Guidance reflects the response to Guideline A-3.

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, in addition to the response to Guideline A-3, the Board directed the applicant to design the building to achieve a residential scale rather than an office/commercial scale. The Board appreciated the initial character sketches that demonstrated this intent, and felt than any of the architectural styles shown in the sketches could achieve this Guideline.

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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted the strong context of the University of Washington newer building to the south and other nearby structures. The Board directed the applicant to design the proposal to be consistent with the context of these high quality durable materials.

D. Pedestrian Environment

D-1 <u>Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances</u>. 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that in addition to the Guidance in response to A-3, overhead weather protection should also be added above the bicycle storage entry at the south façade. The Board appreciated the careful consideration of the bike ramp and stairs to allow bicyclists to approach the bike storage area on grade.

D-6 <u>Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas</u>. 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 was concerned about the ability of residents to safely and easily access the recycling and trash area at the northwest property corner. The Board also expressed concern that the size of the recycling and trash storage would be sufficient, but looks forward to seeing Seattle Public Utilities' advice regarding the size.

The proposed recycling and trash storage should be designed to provide safe adequate access for residents, and the sight and odor should be screened from nearby properties.

This area should not create an unsafe side yard condition by creating dead-end spaces and safety challenges.

D-7 <u>Personal Safety and Security</u>. 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 safety concerns with the proposed side entry as noted in response to A-3 and the proposed trash location as noted in response to D-6. The Board also directed the applicant to design the ground-level units on the south façade to provide safety and security for residents. Lighting and landscaping will be important in enhancing safety at the site.

D-10 <u>Commercial Lighting</u>. 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 noted the importance of adequate lighting to enhance a feeling of night time safety at the residential entry and leasing office.

D-12 <u>Residential Entries and Transitions</u>. 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.

Early Design Guidance reflects the response to Guideline A-3.

E. Landscaping

E-2 <u>Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site</u>. 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.

Early Design Guidance reflects the response to Guidelines A-1 and A-3.

E-3 <u>Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions</u>. 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.

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: The retention of existing, large trees is an important consideration in new construction, particularly on the wooded slopes in the Ravenna Urban Village. The 17th Avenue NE tree-lined boulevard is an important, visually pleasing streetscape.

Guidelines:

1. **Retain existing large trees wherever possible. This is especially important on the wooded slopes in the Ravenna Urban Village.**
2. **The 17th Avenue NE (boulevard) character, with landscaped front yards and uniform street trees, is an important neighborhood feature to be maintained.**

Early Design Guidance reflects the response to Guidelines A-1 and A-3.

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. **Rear setback (23.45.518):** The Code requires a minimum 10' setback from a rear lot line at an alley. The applicant proposes a zero lot line setback at the alley, in order to increase the front setback for health of the exceptional tree.

   The Board indicated support for the proposed departure. At the Recommendation stage of review, the applicant should demonstrate how the proposed departure better meets the intent of specific Design Review Guidelines.

2. **Side setback (23.45.518):** The Code requires a 7' average/5' minimum setback for facades up to 42' high, and a 10' average/7' minimum setback for facades taller than 42'. The applicant proposes a side façade that is consistently set back 8'8" from the side lot line, for the entire height of the façade. This meets the setback requirements for the lower 42', but requires a departure for the building higher than 42'.

   The Board indicated support for the proposed departure. At the Recommendation stage of review, the applicant should demonstrate how the proposed departure better meets the intent of specific Design Review Guidelines.

3. **Projections into required setbacks (23.45.518.H):** The Code allows weather protection to extend 4' into a required setback, as long as it is located at least 3' from the property line.

The applicant proposes that the weather protection canopy is located 1’ from the north property line.

The Board indicated support for the proposed departure. At the Recommendation stage of review, the applicant should demonstrate how the proposed departure better meets the intent of specific Design Review Guidelines.

4. **Solid waste storage (23.54.040):** The Code requires at least 499 square feet of solid waste storage area for a development with 103 apartments. The applicant proposes 411 square feet of solid waste storage, since the units are small studios and expected to generate less waste than larger units.

   The Board indicated some concern with the proposed departure as described in response to Guideline D-6. At the Recommendation stage of review, the applicant should demonstrate how the proposed departure better meets the intent of specific Design Review Guidelines.

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.