City of Seattle

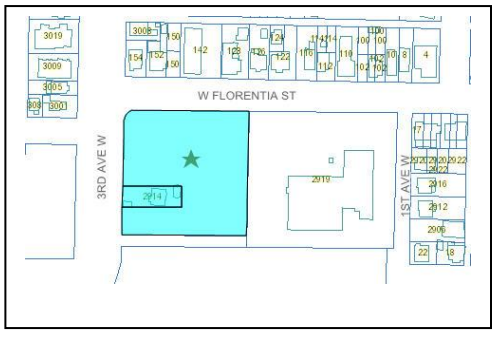
Department of Planning & Development
Diane M. Sugimura, Director

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE
QUEEN ANNE/ MAGNOLIA DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number:	3013191
Address:	2900 Third Ave W
Applicant:	Matt Roewe, Via Architecture for Alex Sandoval, Aegis Living
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, May 16, 2012
Board Members:	David Delfs (Chair) Jacob Connell Patrick Doherty Vlad Oustimovitch
DPD Staff:	Colin R. Vasquez, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone:	Neighborhood Commercial 3 (NC3-65')
Nearby Zones:	(North) LR2 (South) SF5000 (East) LR2 & SF5000 (West) LR2
Lot Area:	75,155 square feet



Current Development:	SPU Tennis Courts
Access:	Primary pedestrian access from Third Ave W. Primary vehicle access from W Florentia St, with emergency/service access from Third Ave W.
Surrounding Development:	Residential structures of various bulk/scale and uses.
ECAs:	None
Neighborhood Character:	The development site includes an existing single family house and tennis courts. The site also has a significant amount of mature trees. The adjacent property includes a park (Queen Anne Bowl) to the south and a school (Northwest Child Development Center) to the east. North and west of the site generally consists of duplexes and larger apartment buildings.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed development is for a three story building for an assisted living facility with approximately 100 apartment units. Also included is one floor programmed to serve residents with specialized memory care needs. Outdoor gardens and roof terrace will be provided for both the assisted living and memory care residents. An arborist engaged by the applicant has determined that seven of the trees on site are "exceptional" per the City of Seattle tree preservation program. Two of the three concept alternatives explored will require some of these trees be removed. The preferred alternative preserves all these exceptional trees. A drop off typical of assisted living facilities, including a safe and weather projected drop off zone is incorporated on all proposed schemes. Code required parking is provided for residents, staff and visitors.

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DESIGN PRESENTATION

Three alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options include vehicle parking access from W Florentia St and emergency/service vehicle access from Third Ave W.

The first scheme (Option 1) shows two separate masses, with the longer massing along 3rd Ave W with on a 5 to 7' building setback. A central courtyard and drop off area is accessed from a southern driveway from 3rd Ave W. The sense of entry is concealed and the assisted living program is compromised without an interior connection to both massing elements at each floor. This option would require all seven significant trees be removed. This option requires more earthwork and sited disturbance than options 2 or 3.

The second scheme (Option 2) shows an "o" shaped massing; the building is set back 35' from W Florentia St allowing a vegetation buffer from the adjacent multifamily across the street. The taller portions of the building massing along 3rd Ave W is setback from the street and steps up the slope creating a residential scale. A covered porch wraps the SW corner to provide residents with views toward the Queen Anne Bowl and to 3rd Ave W. At least one significant tree must be removed. The porte cohere drop off at the street would require a departure for two short term parking stalls and require two curbs. This option requires more earthwork and sited disturbance than option 3.

The third scheme (Option 3) shows a "u" shaped massing; the building is set back 35' from W Florentia St allowing a vegetation buffer from the adjacent multifamily across the street. The building massing along 3rd Ave W is set back from the street and steps up the slope creating a residential scale. A covered porch wraps the SW corner to provide residents with views toward the Queen Anne Bowl and to 3rd Ave W. A vehicle drive lane — to an internal courtyard passenger vehicle drop off area — leads through a landscaped area to reference the entry experience at Seattle Pacific University, to the northeast. No significant trees would be removed. This option requires less earthwork and sited disturbance than options 1 and 2.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

- The project should respect the park atmosphere of the Queen Anne Bowl. The maintenance road should be designed to minimize its impact on the Bowl.
- The site's landscape and ecosystem should be preserved.
- Stated that every senior housing project under this zoning needs the 90' structure width departure because of operational purposes. He commented that the scale of the project and the use as a senior living facility provides a more beneficial use rather than other uses such as cottage housing or multifamily.
- Offered a preference towards Option 3 as it softens the potential impact on the forested edge of the site. He stressed the need to pay attention to the view of the building from the park.
- Support for Aegis as the most complementary buyer for the area since this is a low impact use. In addition, SPU is interested in creating opportunities for students' internships and faculty lectures at the Aegis facility.
- Felt the project should take into account human impacts.
- Spillover lighting from the building towards the park and other common/public areas should be avoided or minimized. 'The dark skies character of the Bowl should be preserved.' The design should limit the delivery trucks having to back up.
- Concerned with parking impacts.

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.

1. Structure Width

Regarding the structure width departure requested by the applicant, the Board asked DPD staff to clarify the intent of this provision in the code. DPD expressed that the code doesn't anticipate senior living facilities and the need for these types of structures to be interconnected for operational purposes. The structure width standard set for LR2 zones sets a limit to avoid long linear facades with no modulation and its focus is mostly for apartment buildings.

The Board discussed this topic and expressed the following (design guidelines):

a. The preferred option shows a very generous setback to preserve vegetation and mitigate the potential impact of a long façade along W Florentia St. This gesture was seen as a positive feature of the preferred option and a good way to mitigate potential impacts in exchange of granting the departure. (B-1, E-1, E-2, E-2)

b. In addition to landscape, the building should be treated with modulation and articulation along the East façade facing the Northwest Center's Child Development Program property. (A-5, B-1)

   DPD confirmed that VIA and Aegis is already working with an arborist to identify and preserve significant trees. (E-3)

c. The Board indicated that the project should pay attention to the visibility of the façade from The Queen Anne Bowl and recognized this as a design problem that can be resolved with modulation and articulation. (A-5, C-3, E-1, E-2, E-3)

d. The Board Chair noted that the 2 absent Board members (Kurfirst, Black) expressed their support via e-mail for the preferred alternative (#3) and for the structure width departure (see attached). These comments were handed out to the design team. (C-1, C-2, C-3)

2. Building Courtyard and Bridge

a. The entry courtyard concept in the preferred alternative was appreciated, but there was some concern amongst the Board regarding the character of the courtyard and the bridge connection the South and North wings of the preferred option. The Board recommended that the courtyard needs further development as well as a better analysis of vehicle circulation. (A-6, A-8, C-1, C-2, D-12)

b. The Board expressed that the bridge as shown in the EDG packet illustrations show a rather institutional character that conflicts with the residential character of the rest of the building. (B-1, C-2, C-3, D-7)

3. Loading Dock Height

a. One Board member questioned if limiting the height of the loading dock would handicap the building operations through the life of the building. (A-5, A-8, C-5, D-5, D-6, D-7, E-3)

b. Other members of the Board recognized that granting the departure to reduce the loading dock height is an overall good feature since this would limit the size of vehicles accessing the loading areas. (A-5, A-8, C-5, D-5, D-6, E-3)

c. The Board also recognized that the same departure was granted for another project from the same applicant.

4. Architectural Lighting

a. The Board agreed that building lighting spillover towards the park and other common/public areas should be avoided or minimized. (A-5, A-10, D-10)

5. South Retaining Wall and Loading Access Screening

a. The treatment of the retaining wall at the south property line should be clearly addressed in future meetings. (D-2, D-3)

b. The Board requested a section drawing and descriptions on how the loading drive lane and retaining wall will be screened for views from the Queen Anne Bowl. (A-5, A-8, C-5, D-4, D-5, D-7, E-1, E-2, E-3)

6. Emergency Vehicle Access

a. The Board asked about the occurrence and location of emergency vehicles (ambulances). Aegis responded that they expect emergency vehicles will come to the main front door entering through the courtyard drop-off area and historically this happens less than once a week. (A-8, C-5, D-5, D-7)

7. Parking Garage Entrance

a. The Board requested noted that the parking garage entrance off Florentia Street should be designed carefully to maximize sight lines, retaining walls with landscaping to promote pedestrian safety. (D-7, E-3)

8. Architectural Language

a. The Board agreed that the architectural language shown in the EDG illustrations was appropriate.

9. Pedestrian Entry Sequence

a. The Board recommended that the pedestrian entrance sequence to the courtyard be legible and inviting.

The Neighborhood specific guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the Design Review website.

A.	***Site Planning***

A-5 ***Respect for Adjacent Sites.*** *Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.*

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.*

A-10 ***Corner Lots.*** *Building on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.*

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.*

C.	***Architectural Elements and Materials***

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.*

C-5 ***Structured Parking Entrances.*** *The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.*

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.*

D-3 ***Retaining Walls.*** *Retaining walls near a public sidewalk that extend higher than eye level should be avoided where possible. Where higher retaining walls are unavoidable, they should be designed to reduce their impact on pedestrian comfort and to increase the visual interest along the streetscapes.*

D-4 ***Design of Parking Lots Near Sidewalks.*** *Parking lots near sidewalks should provide adequate security and lighting, avoid encroachment of vehicles onto the sidewalk, and minimize the visual clutter of parking lot signs and equipment.*

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-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.*

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

D-10 ***Commercial [Exterior/Interior] 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.*

D-12 ***Residential Entries and Transitions.*** *For residential projects …, 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. Landscaping

E-1 ***Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites.*** *Where possible, and where there is not another overriding concern, landscaping should reinforce the character of neighboring properties and abutting streetscape.*

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.*

Departures Requested

1. Structure Width.

The Code limits the structure width to a maximum of 90 feet (SMC 23.86.014). The applicant proposes a "u" shaped building massing with a central courtyard. The eastern wing is hardly visible from the street thanks to grade separation. In addition, the applicant proposes a voluntary setback to preserve existing landscape that will mitigate the potential impact of the long facades. The structure width will technically be about 235', but the massing is articulated and concealed from the street rights of ways.

The Board unanimously agreed to support this departure as shown in the preferred scheme with the provision that landscape and modulation should mitigate the impact of the East and South Facades.

2. Loading Berth Height

The Code requires that among other dimensions, a loading dock in this instance must be a minimum of 14 feet tall and 35 feet deep (SMC 23.54.035 C). The applicant proposes a loading dock height of 12 feet and a depth of 25 feet.

The Board indicated support for this departure as Aegis has indicated that delivery vehicles are smaller and don't need the full height loading berth clearance. In addition the Board sees this as a benefit to the project since it limits the size of delivery trucks accessing the site.

Recommendations

At the conclusion of the EDG meeting the Board stated that they unanimously support the preferred alternative (option 3). The recommended the applicant to move the project forward to MUP Application.