



City of Seattle

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



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3013250

Address: 5000 University Way NE

Applicant: David Cohanim of Cohanim Montclair LLC

Date of Meeting: Monday, December 03, 2012

Board Members Present: Peter Krech (Chair)
Salone Habibudden
Joseph Hurley
Martine Zettle

Board Members Absent: Christina Pizana

DPD Staff Present: Shelley Bolser, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial (NC3-65)

Nearby Zones: (North) NC3P-65
(South) NC3P-65
(East) LR3, across the alley
(West) NC3P-65

Lot Area: 26,052 square feet



Current Development: One-story early 20th century commercial buildings, a 3-story mixed use residential and commercial building, and surface parking.

Access: Existing vehicular access is via one curb cut at University Way NE and via the alley.

A three-story early 20th century school building, converted to a community center (University Heights Community Center) is located across the street to the west. A surface parking lot that serves as the location for the University Farmer's Market once a week is adjacent to this building. P-patches are located on the east and south sides of the UHCC building. A future park is planned for the south portion of this site.

Surrounding Development: A newer one-story building and surface parking lot are located to the north. Early 20th century apartment buildings, ranging from 2-4 stories, are located across the alley to the east.

Across the street to the south are 1-3 story early 20th century buildings with a wide variety of uses. A religious institution and associated services are located across the street to the southeast, and retail, restaurant, and a theater are located directly across the street to the south.

To the southwest across the intersection is a mid-20th century auto-oriented drive-through restaurant with surface parking.

The University of Washington campus is located a few blocks to the southeast. The future light rail station (to open in approximately 2020) is located a few blocks to the south. University Way ("The Ave") borders the west side of this site.

Neighborhood Character: The site is located in the University Urban Center. Urban Centers are intended to be neighborhoods with higher density development, taller structures, and a variety of commercial uses and services near transit. The University Urban Center exhibits many of these characteristics, although some of the parcels are underdeveloped when compared to the zoned heights and intensity of uses. Most of the commercial uses and services are located on the main arterial streets.

The nearby neighborhood is fully developed with sidewalks, but often lacks planting strips and street trees. Transit service is frequent and includes a variety of routes. The future light rail station will further increase the frequency and choice of modes of transit. The nearby streets are heavily used by pedestrians, cyclists, transit, and other vehicles

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a 7-story structure with 125 residential units above 10,000sf of ground level commercial/retail, and 55 parking stalls. The parking stalls would be accessed from the alley, and located in structured above-grade parking at the second floor.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: December 3, 2012
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The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3013250) at this website:

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

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

Mailing Public Resource Center

Address: 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000

P.O. Box 34019

Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

The proposal includes setbacks at the street and alley to add greater sidewalk width and additional planting areas to the narrow sidewalk and alley. The rooftop of the proposed development would include planting or p-patches to respond to the context of the future park on the UHCC site.

The preferred option includes a stepped west façade. The first step back (above the first floor) would include green roof and green wall areas to screen the second story parking level. The second step (above the second story) would provide area for residential terraces.

The southwest corner retail is proposed as double height glazing to respond to the corner context.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- The small narrow storefronts should be maintained in the new retail spaces, since these provide opportunities for varied retail and restaurant uses. Restaurant uses are encouraged.
- The proposed setbacks are a good addition to the narrow sidewalk and alley.
- The bicycle parking should be designed to provide enough storage area for residents' bicycles, and the storage area should be designed to be flexible over time.
- The alley should be designed to accommodate existing and future levels of pedestrian traffic in the area.

- Trash and recycling storage and staging areas should be recessed and screened.
- The alley and alley entrances should be designed for pedestrian safety and visual interest.
- The curb should be moved further into the street to expand the sidewalk area (“curb bulb”).
- The intersection should be designed to increase safety and decrease pedestrian/car accidents.
- The lighting and building design should work to improve safety and security in the area.

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 (December 3, 2012):

1. Architectural Concept:

- The proposed setbacks are a good response to the narrow sidewalks, and the glazed storefront corner is a good response to the corner condition. (A-1, A-2, A-4, A-10, B-1, C-2, C-3, C-4, D-1, D-11, E-2)
- The upper and lower portions of the design should emphasize the corner location and respond to the architectural concept. (A-10, C-2, C-4)
 - A strong corner design may be challenging at the street level with proposed setback and glazing, but the Board was supportive of the proposed design direction.
- Overhead weather protection should be used to create usable sheltered areas for pedestrians at the corner and also create human scale at the corner. (A-3, A-4, A-10, B-1, C-3, D-1)
- Building entries will be important to the street level design and should relate to the architectural concept. (A-3, C-2)
- Commercial transparency and signage should create visual interest and enhance human activity at the street frontages. (D-2, D-9, D-11)
- The proposal should respond to the context of activity in the area, but not necessarily nearby historic architecture. (A-1, C-1, E-3)
 - The design should respond to the future park across the street, the activity on University Way NE, and other nearby hubs and corridors of activity.
- The lighting plan should enhance safety and security at the street frontages. (D-7, D-10)

2. Above Grade Parking: The Board noted that the proposed above-grade parking is a concern. The ‘dead zone’ of the parking floor may detract from human activity at the street level.

- Possible solutions include extending the commercial expression up to the second floor, lowering the residential expression down to the second floor, or creating a ‘feature’ at the second floor. (A-7, A-8, A-9, C-2, C-3, C-4, D-5, E-2)

- b. A ‘feature’ is a more challenging approach to do successfully, but it could be an opportunity for a biophilic design that includes strategies such as interesting lighting and landscaping to respond to the context of the Farmers market and the future park across the street. (A-1, A-4, A-7, C-2, C-3, C-4, E-2, E-3)
 - c. The context of the future park across the street will result in a view of this parking level for perpetuity. Therefore the design of the west façade and second floor parking is particularly critical. (A-1, A-2, A-9, C-2, C-3, C-4, D-5, E-2, E-3)
- 3. **Materials:** The Board emphasized that high quality durable materials will be critical on this building, given the prominence of this corner in the University District and the high degree of visibility that will result from the future park.
 - a. Brick at the street level with cementitious siding above will not be sufficient for this context, given the permanent “long view” of this site that will be visible across the future park, and the prominence of this corner in the neighborhood and on University Way NE. (A-1, A-2, A-10, B-1, C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4)
 - b. High quality and finely detailed materials are needed at all levels of this building. (A-1, B-1, C-2, C-3, C-4, D-2)
 - c. The street frontages should be very high quality finely detailed materials. (A-1, A-2, C-2, C-3, C-4, D-2)
 - d. The alley façade should be well detailed but the materials can reflect the alley condition rather than the prominence of the street facing facades. (A-1, B-1, C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4)
- 4. **Alley Facade:**
 - a. The alley edge should be designed for sufficient vehicle access. The Board noted that the garage access point may be too close to the alley intersection, given the alley grade. (D-5, D-6, D-7, D-8)
 - b. The proposal should include sufficient area for trash and recycling storage and staging. The storage area and staging should be screened visually and to minimize odors, given the proximity of residences and pedestrians to the alley façade. (C-2, D-6)
 - c. The alley façade should include a pedestrian entry for residents. (D-1, D-8)
 - d. The alley façade and street frontage should be designed for access by cyclists. Entries should be designed with overhead weather protection and the entry doors should be designed for easy access for people using bicycles. (D-1, D-7, D-8)
 - e. The lighting plan should enhance safety at the alley. (D-7, D-8)
- 5. **Street level design:**
 - a. The Board supports a curb bulb to complement any nearby or proposed curb bulbs to increase pedestrian safety and allow more sidewalk area. The Board noted that curb bulbs are within the purview of Seattle Department of Transportation. (A-2, D-7)

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-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.

- A-2 Streetscape Compatibility. The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.**

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: Reinforcing the pedestrian streetscape and protecting public view corridors are particularly important site planning issues. Stepping back upper floors allows more sunlight to reach the street, minimizes impact to views, and maintains the low- to medium rise character of the streetscape. Roof decks providing open space for mixed-use development can be located facing the street so that upper stories are, in effect, set back.

Guideline - Solar Orientation: Minimizing shadow impacts is important in the University neighborhood. The design of a structure and its massing on the site can enhance solar exposure for the project and minimize shadow impacts onto adjacent public areas between March 21st and September 21st. This is especially important on blocks with narrow rights-of-way relative to other neighborhood streets, including University Way, south of NE 50th Street.

- A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street. 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.

- A-4 Human Activity.** New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: Pedestrian orientation and activity should be emphasized in the University Community, particularly along Mixed Use Corridors. While most streets feature narrow sidewalks relative to the volume of pedestrian traffic, wider sidewalks and more small open spaces for sitting, street musicians, bus waiting, and other activities would benefit these areas. Pedestrian-oriented open spaces, such as wider sidewalks and plazas, are encouraged as long as the setback does not detract from the “street wall.”

Guidelines: On Mixed Use Corridors, where narrow sidewalks exist (less than 15’ wide), consider recessing entries to provide small open spaces for sitting, street musicians, bus waiting, or other pedestrian activities. Recessed entries should promote pedestrian movement and avoid blind corners.

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

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: There is a severe lack of both public and private open space in the community. Small open spaces—such as gardens, courtyards, or plazas—that are visible or accessible to the public are an important part of the neighborhood’s vision. Therefore, providing ground-level open space is an important public objective and will improve the quality of the residential environment.

Guidelines:

1. The ground-level open space should be designed as a plaza, courtyard, play area, mini-park, pedestrian open space, garden, or similar occupiable site feature. The

quantity of open space is less important than the provision of functional and visual ground-level open space.

2. A central courtyard in cottage or townhouse developments may provide better open space than space for each unit. In these cases, yard setbacks may be reduced if a sensitive transition to neighbors is maintained.

- 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.

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: In Lowrise residential developments, single-lane driveways (approximately 12 feet in width) are preferred over wide or multiple driveways where feasible.

- A-9 Location of Parking on Commercial Street Fronts.** Parking on a commercial street front should be minimized and where possible should be located behind a building.

- 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.

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: The Citywide Design Guidelines encourage buildings on corner lots to orient to the corner and adjacent street fronts. Within the University Community there are several intersections that serve as “gateways” to the neighborhood.

Guideline: For new buildings located on a corner, including, but not limited to the corner locations identified in Map 3, consider providing special building elements distinguishable from the rest of the building such as a tower, corner articulation or bay windows. Consider a special site feature such as diagonal orientation and entry, a sculpture, a courtyard, or other device. Corner entries should be set back to allow pedestrian flow and good visibility at the intersection.

- 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.

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: The residential areas are experiencing a change from houses to block-like apartments. Also, the proximity of lower intensive zones to higher intensive zones requires special attention to potential impacts of increased height, bulk and scale. These potential impact areas are shown in Map 4 . The design and siting of buildings is critical to maintaining stability and Lowrise character.

Guideline: Special attention should be paid to projects in the following areas to minimize impacts of increased height, bulk and scale as stated in the Citywide Design Guideline.

- C-1 Architectural Context.** New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: Buildings in the University Community feature a broad range of building types with an equally broad range of architectural character. Because of the area's variety, no single architectural style or character emerges as a dominant direction for new construction. As an example, the University of Washington campus sets a general direction in architectural style and preference for masonry and cast stone materials, however, new buildings on and off campus incorporate the general massing and materials of this character, rather than replicating it.

Guidelines:

1. Although no single architectural style or character emerges as a dominant direction for new construction in the University Community, project applicants should show how the proposed design incorporates elements of the local architectural character especially when there are buildings of local historical significance or landmark status in the vicinity.
 2. For areas within Ravenna Urban Village, particularly along 25th Avenue NE, the style of architecture is not as important so long as it emphasizes pedestrian orientation and avoids large-scale, standardized and auto-oriented characteristics.
 3. On Mixed Use Corridors, consider breaking up the façade into modules of not more than 50 feet (measured horizontally parallel to the street) on University Way and 100 feet on other corridors, corresponding to traditional platting and building construction.
 4. When the defined character of a block, including adjacent or facing blocks, is comprised of historic buildings, or groups of buildings of local historic importance and character, as well as street trees or other significant vegetation (as identified in the 1975 Inventory and subsequent updating), the architectural treatment of new development should respond to this local historical character.
 5. Buildings in Lowrise zones should provide a "fine-grained" architectural character.
- 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.

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.**

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-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.**

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.**

- 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-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.**

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Guidelines:

- 1. The preferred solution for parking structures is to incorporate commercial uses at the ground level. Below-grade parking is the next best solution for parking.**
- 2. There should be careful consideration of the surrounding street system when locating auto access. When the choice is between an arterial and a lower volume, residential street, access should be placed on the arterial.**
- 3. Structured parking façades facing the street and residential areas should be designed and treated to minimize impacts, including sound transmission from inside the parking structure.**

- 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-8 **Treatment of Alleys.** The design of alley entrances should enhance the pedestrian street front.
- 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.
- 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.
- D-11 **Commercial Transparency.** Commercial storefronts should be transparent, allowing for a direct visual connection between pedestrians on the sidewalk and the activities occurring on the interior of a building. Blank walls should be avoided.
- 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.

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.

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 departure was requested:

- 1. Street Level Development Standards - Transparency (SMC 23.47A.008):** The Code requires a minimum transparency of 60% between 2' and 8' of height on street level facades. The applicant proposes to place transparency level with the storefront on NE 50th St, which may not meet minimum standards for this street frontage.

The Board indicated support for the proposed departure, dependent on the design response to the guidance related to the street front design and enhancing the corner. (A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-10, B-1, C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4, D-1, D-2, D-7, D-9, D-10, D-11, E-2, E-3)

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.