



City of Seattle

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



FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE SOUTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3013340 & 3014815

Address: 4735-4765 35th Avenue South

Applicant: Christy Santos of Nicholson Kovalchick Architects

Date of Meeting: July 6, 2013

Board Members Present: Sam Cameron
Amoreena Miller
Stephen Yamada-Heidner

Board Members Absent: Tony Case
Ben Smith

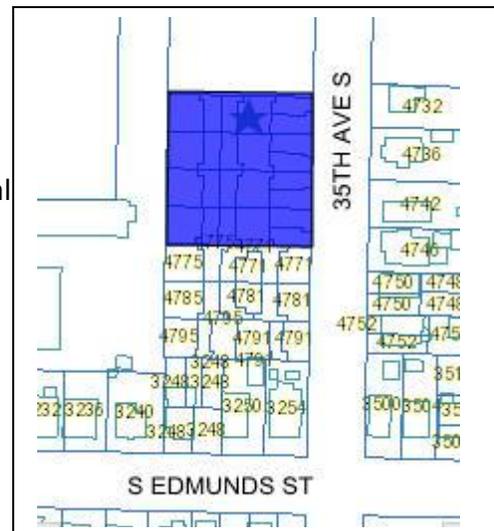
DPD Staff Present: Lisa Rutzick

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Lowrise Three (LR3) within a Station Overlay.

Nearby Zones: North: Single Family 5000 (SF 5000) north of S. Alaska St.
South: SF 5000 south of S. Edmunds St.
East: LR2 east of 35th Ave S.
West: LR2 and Neighborhood Commercial One with a 40' height limit and a Pedestrian zone (NC1P 40).

Lot Area: 24,000 square feet



Current Development: Vacant. The site comprises four tax parcels located mid-block along 35th Ave S between S. Alaska and S. Edmunds Streets. The nearly square property measures 156' wide by 153' deep. The site slopes from the highest point on the southwest corner to the lowest point on the northeast corner. Total declension amounts to approximately 18 feet.

Access: 35th Avenue South

Surrounding Development & Neighborhood Character: Located in Columbia City, the site lies surrounded by institutional and residential uses. Several parks, including Columbia Park and Rainier Playfield, are within walking distance of the site. To the east, several single family structures, townhouse and apartment developments, as well as Elder Healthcare Northwest, comprise the majority of land uses. Directly to the west lies the Zion Prep Academy and further west, a light rail station and Rainier Vista complex. North of the subject property is the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind. Immediately to the south sits a recently constructed townhouse project comprised of a series of three-plex structures.

Rainier Ave S., located about two blocks east of the project, and Martin Luther King Jr. Way S, about two blocks west of the project, form major north/south arterials within close proximity. The site sits midway between S. Alaska St. to the north and S. Edmunds St to the south. Both streets provide key connects to the Columbia City business district and the light rail station.

Columbia City has witnessed considerable new development and maintains significant ethnic and income diversity.

ECAs: No environmental critical areas.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes a development of 18 to 24 units in a mix of single family and townhouse structures with a shared driveway accessing parking mostly within structures.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The development team presented several alternative site planning schemes for the small complex of single family and townhouses structures. Option # 1 illustrates four townhouse structures with two units in each building fronting on 35th Ave S. Two driveways connect to four parallel groupings of townhouses (five units in each linear row) that extend east/west on the site. Much of the site comprises driveways linking the individual garages to the street. Open space runs in narrow, linear swaths forming the side yards, rear yard and an area separating the paired rows of townhouses. The design does little to capitalize on the significant grade change.

Option #2 limits the curb cut on 35th Ave S to one. The driveway splits the townhouses facing the street into two groupings of two and seven units each. The driveway leads to two parallel structures of five units each. Directly behind the two unit townhouse facing the street lies two units surrounded by common open space in the site's southwest corner. This design also removes the site's distinctive topography.

Scheme #3A, similar to Option #1, forms a bilaterally symmetrical design with a common driveway midway between the north and south property lines. The grouping of structures occurs in three layers. Moving from east to west, the first layer of two buildings with three units each faces 35th Ave S. Two driveways leading to unit garages connect to the street adding a total of three curb cuts to the complex as a whole. The second layer of units forms a cluster of eight units in five separate structures facing a common driveway. The buildings form an "I" shaped void comprised of driveways. The third and western most layer consists of two structures with two units each. The units connect to the driveways that establish the separation among buildings. A majority of the useable open space is pushed to the rear yard, to most of the side yards with some exception for structures that would sit on the north and south property lines, and to the front yards along the street. Narrow amounts of green or decks line the pathways through the complex. Of the schemes, this option takes advantage of the topography by allowing the layers of units or structures to step up the incline. The applicant also presented a slightly altered version of this scheme at the meeting (not included in the EDG packet). This scheme possesses six single family and five townhouses structures totaling 18 units. Three curb cuts line 35th Ave S. Two walkways link to the right of way near the north and south property lines. This scheme has more space open space surrounding the single family nits near the rear of the site.

Still another version of this scheme, #3B, imagines the site expanded to include the vacant property to the north. This has the same layering of units and an extensive driveway system. Additional units are in single family structures. This option has 24 units in eight single family and seven townhouse structures.

By the Recommendation meeting, the applicant had expanded the proposal in conformance with scheme #3B.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Trash Collection Area:

- The location of the solid waste location is reasonable; however the route to haul to the curb is not realistic.
- The trash building is disappointing in its relationship to the street. The applicant is adding another set of garage doors facing the frontage.

Pedestrian Access

- With the possible redevelopment of the Mt. Zion property to the west, there is an opportunity to allow pedestrian access through the subject site to enable more direct

circulation to the light rail station and Columbia City business district. Departures should not be allowed without this provision.

Setbacks

- The departures would allow the complex to be too close to the neighbors to the south.
- The structures create a canyon between the townhouses to the south and the proposal.

Green Space

- The environmentally critical area ought to inform the design with greater amounts of green space. Coupled with the departures that allow larger structure footprints, the amount of open space is limited.

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.**

The Board did not deliberate on the issue discussed at the EDG meeting.

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

After discussion, the Board recommended that the large opening for the solid waste disposal room be oriented to the south, perpendicular to the sidewalk, rather than face the street.

Previous guidance had urged the elimination of two extra curb cuts on 35th Ave S. The Board did not object to the two shown on the plans.

- 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.**

Recommendation Meeting: See guidance A-7.

- 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.**

The discussion of the departure requests governing setbacks resulted in the Board recommending approval for setback relief from the north property line but denial for the request from the south property line.

- 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.**

See discussion from guidance A-2.

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

The Board recommended the introduction of additional communal open space unencumbered by vehicle movements. The amount of open space should approximate the size of the roof covering the trash enclosure. If the applicant designates the rooftop as usable open space, the entire entry area must include stairs, landings, and landscaping in front of the of the revised storage room to be designed as a comprehensive 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.**

Install porous pavers on all areas of the driveways and drive court.

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

No further deliberation occurred for 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.**

The Board did not comment on the proposed choice of materials and colors.

- 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.**

See guidance for A-2.

D. Pedestrian Environment

- 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.**

The Board recommended the installation of an east-west pathway through the site which would enable future mid-block pedestrian access from the property line shared with Zion Prep site to 35th Ave SW.

- 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.**

The appearance of the retaining walls did not merit discussion.

- 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.**

No comments were added to the record.

- 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.**

The Board recommended reorienting the large opening of the solid waste enclosure to the south. Install generous landscaping between the east façade of the enclosure and 35 Ave SW to assure an attractive street frontage.

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

The lighting plan met with approval.

E. Landscaping

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.

Enhance the site's landscaping by meeting the following conditions: do not place fencing along 35th Ave SW, use porous or pervious pavers for the driveways and drive courts, provide plantings between the east wall of the trash enclosure and 35th Ave.

Landscaping will also be enhanced by creation of a pathway linking the east and west property lines, an outdoor communal area either on top of the trash enclosure area or if at-grade (it must equal the size of the roof) and include a comprehensive design for stairs, landings, and landscaping in front of the structure.

Recommendations: The recommendations summarized below were based on the plans and models submitted at the February 20, 2013 meeting. Design, siting or architectural details not specifically identified or altered in these recommendations are expected to remain as presented in the plans and other drawings available at the February 20, 2013 public meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities, and reviewing the plans and renderings, the Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design and the requested development standard departures from the requirements of the Land Use Code (listed below). The Board recommends the following CONDITIONS for the project. (Authority referred in the letter and number in parenthesis):

- 1) Orient the large opening for the trash enclosure to the south, perpendicular to the sidewalk, rather than face the street. (A-2, D-6)
- 2) Design and install a communal open space for residents unencumbered by vehicle movements. The amount of open space should approximate the size of the roof covering the trash enclosure. If the applicant designates the rooftop, the entire open space will include stairs, landings, landscaping in front of the revised solid waste enclosure to be comprehensively designed. (A-7, D-2)
- 3) Use porous or pervious pavers for all the driveways and drive court. (A-8, E-2)
- 4) Design and install a pathway connecting the east and west property lines in order to foster a mid-block path linking Columbia City business district and the light rail station. (D-1)
- 5) Maintain the openness of the site by not installing fences along 35th Ave SW. (E-2)
- 6) Add plantings between the east wall of the trash enclosure and the 35th Ave SW right of way. (E-2)

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) are 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).

STANDARD	REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	JUSTIFICATION	RECOMMENDATION
1. Side Setback SMC 23.45.518	Side setback for townhouse facades greater than 40' equals 7' average and 5' minimum.	North Property Line: At Building # 6 a 6.54' average setback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides courtyards. 	Recommended Approval 3-0
2. Side Setback SMC 23.45.518	Side setback for townhouse facades greater than 40' equals 7' average and 5' minimum.	South Property Line: At Building #1, a 5.08 average setback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides courtyards. 	Recommended Denial. 3-0
3. Side Setback SMC 23.45.518	Side setback for townhouse facades greater than 40' equals 7' average and 5' minimum.	At Mid-property line between Buildings # 4 and 5, zero lot line.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interior lot lines that are part of the overall complex. 	Recommended Approval 3-0
4. Side Setback SMC 23.45.518	Side setback for townhouse facades greater than 40' equals 7' average and 5' minimum.	At Mid-property line between Building #8 and the trash enclosure, the applicant proposes a zero lot line.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interior lot lines that are part of the overall complex. 	Recommended Approval 3-0
5. Screening of Parking. SMC 23.45.536D	Where parking is within structure and garage doors face the Street, garage doors shall be set back at least 15' from the street lot line.	Garage doors setback 13'5" from the street lot line. 18" differential.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shorter driveway prevents vehicles from parking on the driveway. 	Recommended Approval 3-0
6. Façade Length. SMC 23.45.527	Maximum combined length of all portions of facades within 15' of a lot line shall not exceed 65% of length of lot line. $.65 \times 152.64 = 99.2'$	South Property Line: Combined length of Buildings #1, 2 & 3 equals 122.33 or 80% of the lot line.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buildings separated by open spaces. 	Recommended Approval 3-0
7. Front Setback SMC 23.45.518	Front setback for townhouse facades equals 7' average and 5' minimum	Building # 1 equals 6'10" average. Average reduction of 2"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building has significant modulations. 	Recommended Approval 3-0