



City of Seattle

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



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3013374

Address: 1720 12th Avenue

Applicant: Sreemathi Iyer of Schemata Workshop

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, June 13, 2012

Board Members Present: Wolf Saar (Chair)
Dawn Bushnaq
Ric Cochrane
Lisa Picard
Chip Wall
Boting Zhang

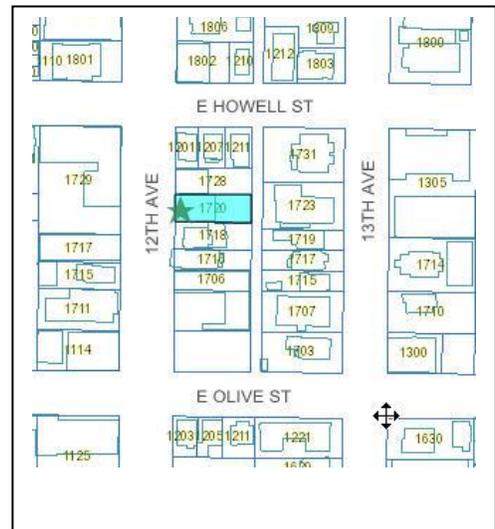
DPD Staff Present: Shelley Bolser, Lindsay King, and Jess Harris for DPD

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: NC3-40

Nearby Zones: North: NC3-40
South: NC3-40
East: LR3
West: NC3-40

Lot Area: 4,520 square feet



Current Development: One-story commercial structure

Access: Surface parking at the alley

Surrounding Development: Multi-family and single-family structures are located to the east and a half block to the north. One to two story commercial structures are located to the south, with one to four story apartment buildings across the street to the west. A new four story residential building is proposed across the street.

Neighborhood Character: The site is located near the Pike-Pine Corridor and near the future Capitol Hill light rail station. The neighborhood includes a wide mix of uses. Most development includes older single story residential and commercial structures, older multi-story residential and mixed-use structures, newer lowrise residential and mixed-use, and mid-rise residential and mixed-use buildings.

The architectural character of older buildings includes masonry, punched windows, and regularly spaced bays and windows. Newer development includes a wider variety of styles with more modern expression.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a 6-story structure with 12 residential units above 1,500 sq. ft. of commercial space. The project is participating in the Living Building challenge Pilot Programs. No parking is proposed.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: June 13, 2012

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3013374) 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 applicant noted that the proposed residential units would be occupied by a cohousing development, with shared open space for the cohousing community. A rooftop urban farm is proposed, with the intent of providing produce to the cohousing community with surplus sold at

farmer's markets nearby. The ground floor commercial space would be occupied by an architectural office.

The proposal is seeking the Living Building Pilot Program, which includes a variety of departures from Land Use Code requirements. The applicant provided a shadow study demonstrating the proposed shadows from the additional height that is sought under the Living Building Challenge Pilot program.

The applicant also showed examples of some user-operable shading options that might be used on the east and west facades. Design goals include large amounts of transparency at the street, rain gardens at the street frontage, a common courtyard for cohousing residents, and rooftop gardens for agricultural production.

The north and south walls would be located at the property lines. Possible treatment of these facades includes large graphic treatments, green walls, or potentially an easement from adjacent neighbors to provide windows at the north and south facades. An easement would also be needed to provide maintenance of green walls on these facades. The applicant anticipates wrapping the exterior building material into the alley for a consistent façade. The framing system would hopefully be heavy timber, which offers a life cycle of 250 years.

Proposed departures include height, floor area ratio, and setbacks, related to achieving the Living Building Pilot Program requirements.

The proposed courtyard is approximately 20'x22' in dimension. The courtyard would be connected to the community room.

Trash collection would be at the alley. The applicant noted that the produce production exported off site would likely be small and not require a loading zone. The proposed business at grade is the applicant's architecture firm, so no loading berths would be needed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following comments, issues and concerns were raised during public comment:

- Believes the proposal is spot zoning.
- Asserts the height is unwarranted because of impacts to light and views of adjacent neighbors (several comments).
- Would like a community P-patch at the rooftop and for the building to provide any residential amenities to the public.
- Need to eliminate the courtyard and build lot line to lot line.
- Believes the proposed development should be constructed underground.
- Complaints about parking meters and lack of proposed parking.
- Believes parking should be provided and there is lack of on street parking.
- Street has existing density and capacity for more, due to nearby transit.

- Need to look at proposed development in context with the future of Capitol Hill.
- Need to treat the exterior to blend in with the scale of the neighborhood and future development.
- This development could be higher density and still include no parking with a structure located from lot line to lot line. Instead the applicants are designing for family units, which is good for Capitol Hill.
- Landscape Architect for Cal Anderson Park noted that park design was intended to serve increased future density that was identified in this neighborhood.
- The building needs a courtyard for daylighting to meet Living Building Pilot requirements, and therefore the courtyard is appropriate.
- The setbacks on 12th Ave are appropriate.
- The rooftop urban agriculture is a great idea.
- Capitol Hill Housing supports the project, the program, the cohousing use, and the Living Building Pilot goals. The departures are necessary and warranted.
- Scheme 4 is great for urban agriculture and will make it possible for an urban farmer to make a successful urban farming operation.
- The cohousing community members present at the meeting spoke in support and described their intent for long term residency.

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:

Height Bulk and Scale: The Board focused giving guidance on massing option #4:

1. The proposed design should demonstrate a response to the sloping lot. (A-1)
2. Setting back the upper story at the east façade should be considered, or demonstrate how the proposed departure #3 better meets DR Guidelines in this area. (A-5, B-1)
3. On 12th Ave, the bulk is less concerning but the applicant should demonstrate how the proposed design relates to the pedestrian scale. The Board had some concern with the ‘fins’ that extend down to grade and may interrupt the potential sidewalk width. (A-1, A-2, A-4)
4. The Board was concerned with the impacts of Departures 1 and 2, given the neighbors to the east. The applicant should demonstrate how the departures are necessary for the Living Building Pilot requirements, and demonstrate how the proposed upper mass is arranged to minimize impacts to the neighbors. (A-1, A-5, A-7, B-1)
 - a. Explore options to minimize the impacts of the stair and elevator tower:
 - i. Erode the mass physically, and/or use a high level of transparency or other efforts.
 - ii. Consider flipping the floor plan or locating the elevator/stair tower to a different location on site with fewer impacts to adjacent neighbors.

- b. Consider relocating the courtyard/light well to respond to likely future development. It will likely serve as a light well rather than an open courtyard, given proposed and future development.
- c. Demonstrate how the rooftop urban farm and height departure is required for the Living Building requirements (the occupation of the upper roof mandates the requirement for the elevator tower, so reducing the occupiable roof area may reduce impacts of the elevator tower to nearby neighbors).

Architectural concept: The Board discussed the response to neighborhood patterns and expression of Living Building goals:

1. The applicant should consider using the program as more of a demonstration opportunity – for instance, place the common kitchen with transparency facing the alley or street frontage. (A-4, C-2)
2. The treatment of north and south facades should be consistent with overall concept (four planes of the building that are consistent with the overall design concept). (C-2)
3. The proposed development will set a new precedent for design on the block. The future of 12th Ave will likely respond to the 40-44' height. The design of the façade scale should consider this future context. (A-2, C-3)
4. The design concept and materials should express and reinforce the 250 year building lifespan goal. (C-4)
5. The landscape plan should enhance the site and set a high standard for future development in the vicinity. (E-2)

Blank Walls: A well thought out concept is needed for the blank walls at the north and south facades. (C-2, B-1, D-2). The Board weighed in on the potential blank wall treatments shown in the packet:

1. Green walls of the proposed height are hard to maintain.
2. Consider the strategy used at 1310 Union that integrated an architectural solution rather than an applied art solution alone. The two strategies together could be successful.
3. The north and south facades could include a surface material that adds to the public education component of the Living Building Challenge (for example, if a heavy timber structure is used, perhaps the timber could be expressed at the north and south edges).
4. The bold architectural concept should be carried through the blank wall areas.

Alley:

1. The applicant should demonstrate how the proposed design concept could be expressed at the alley, given the alley conditions. (C-2, D-8)
2. The alley façade should be activated and respond to the context at that edge. (A-4, A-5)
 - a. A building entry with a patio or similar surface treatment near the building might be appropriate, given the alley context. (D-1, E-2)
 - b. The common kitchen could also be located adjacent to the alley, to express the cohousing nature of the proposed use and provide human activity at the alley façade. (A-4, C-2)

At the Recommendation meeting, the applicant should provide graphics and text to demonstrate the responses to the Early Design Guidance. The Board specifically requested the following additional information at the Recommendation meeting:

1. Sections through the site with adjacent and across the alley structures, as well as thorough graphic representation of all sides of the building. (A-1, A-2, A-5, D-8)
2. Demonstrate the design of the alley façade as it relates to the common room area, building entries, and areas of utilities or other services. (D-8)
3. Demonstrate how the proposed departures 1 and 2 are needed to meet the Living Building Pilot Program requirements. (A-5, B-1, C-2)
4. Show a context analysis of the alley conditions and how the proposed alley design concepts could be achieved. (D-8)
5. Demonstrate how proposed 12th Ave setback relates to the existing conditions and sidewalk width (the fins at building shell may not be the best solution), given current and distant future pedestrian needs. (A-2, A-4, D-1)
6. Provide a signage plan, a lighting plan with fixture graphics and cut sheets, and demonstrate commercial transparency at the Recommendation level of review. (D-9, D-10, D-11)
7. Provide pedestrian level graphics demonstrating the detail of the residential and office entries at the street frontage, as well as any building entrances at the alley (D-12)

See the “Design Review Report: Applicant Instructions” for other standard information required at the next stages of review.

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The Board identified the following 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.

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Retain or increase the width of sidewalks.
- Provide street trees with tree grates or in planter strips, using appropriate species to provide summer shade, winter light, and year-round visual interest.
- Vehicle entrances to buildings should not dominate the streetscape.
- Orient townhouse structures to provide pedestrian entrances to the sidewalk.

- For buildings that span a block and “front” on two streets, each street frontage should receive individual and detailed site planning and architectural design treatments to complement the established streetscape character.
- New development in commercial zones should be sensitive to neighboring residential zones. Examples include lots on Broadway that extend to streets with residential character, such as Nagle Place or 10th or Harvard Avenues East. While a design with a commercial character is appropriate along Broadway, compatibility with residential character should be emphasized along the other streets.

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Provide for sidewalk retail opportunities and connections by allowing for the opening of the storefront to the street and displaying goods to the pedestrian.
- Provide for outdoor eating and drinking opportunities on the sidewalk by allowing for the opening the restaurant or café windows to the sidewalk and installing outdoor seating while maintaining pedestrian flow.
- Install clear glass windows along the sidewalk to provide visual access into the retail or dining activities that occur inside. Do not block views into the interior spaces with the backs of shelving units or with posters.

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Incorporate quasi-public open space with new residential development or redevelopment, with special focus on corner landscape treatments and courtyard entries.
- Create substantial courtyard-style open space that is visually accessible to the public view.
- Set back development where appropriate to preserve a view corridor.
- Set back upper floors to provide solar access to the sidewalk and/or neighboring properties.
- Mature street trees have a high value to the neighborhood and departures from development standards that an arborist determines would impair the health of a mature tree are discouraged.
- Use landscape materials that are sustainable, requiring minimal irrigation or fertilizer.
- Use porous paving materials to minimize stormwater run-off.

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.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Break up building mass by incorporating different façade treatments to give the impression of multiple, small-scale buildings, in keeping with the established development pattern.
- Consider existing views to downtown Seattle, the Space Needle, Elliott Bay and the Olympic Mountains, and incorporate site and building design features that may help to preserve those views from public rights-of-way.
- Design new buildings to maximize the amount of sunshine on adjacent sidewalks throughout the year.

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.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Incorporate signage that is consistent with the existing or intended character of the building and the neighborhood.
- Solid canopies or fabric awnings over the sidewalk are preferred.
- Avoid using vinyl awnings that also serve as big, illuminated signs.
- Use materials and design that is compatible with the structures in the vicinity if those represent the desired neighborhood character.

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Incorporate building entry treatments that are arched or framed in a manner that welcomes people and protects them from the elements and emphasizes the building's architecture.
- Improve and support pedestrian-orientation by using components such as: non-reflective storefront windows and transoms; pedestrian-scaled awnings; architectural detailing on the first floor; and detailing at the roof line.

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.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Use wood shingles or board and batten siding on residential structures.
- Avoid wood or metal siding materials on commercial structures.
- Provide operable windows, especially on storefronts.
- Use materials that are consistent with the existing or intended neighborhood character, including brick, cast stone, architectural stone, terracotta details, and concrete that incorporates texture and color.
- Consider each building as a high-quality, long-term addition to the neighborhood; exterior design and materials should exhibit permanence and quality appropriate to the Capitol Hill neighborhood.
- The use of applied foam ornamentation and EIFS (Exterior Insulation & Finish System) is discouraged, especially on ground level locations.

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.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Provide entryways that link the building to the surrounding landscape.
- Create open spaces at street level that link to the open space of the sidewalk.
- Building entrances should emphasize pedestrian ingress and egress as opposed to accommodating vehicles.
- Minimize the number of residential entrances on commercial streets where non-residential uses are required. Where residential entries and lobbies on commercial streets are unavoidable, minimize their impact to the retail vitality commercial streetscape.

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-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.
- D-12 Residential Entries and Transitions.** 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.
- 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.

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:

Living Building Departures:

The Board's recommendation on the requested departures is based upon the departure's potential to help the project better meet the Living Building Challenge objectives, the design guideline priorities, and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure. The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

- 1. Building Height (23.47A.014):** A height departure is sought for up to 10 additional feet above the base height of the NC3-40 zone (44'). The additional floor-to-floor height is desired to meet the requirements for the Living Building Challenge.

The Board indicated that additional studies and examination of the bulk and scale considerations outlined above, as well as more information regarding the Living Building imperatives as related to height are warranted before they can provide direction regarding such a departure request. (A-5, A-7, B-1)

- 2. Floor Area Ratio (23.47A.013):** The Code allows a maximum FAR of 4 in this particular area and zone. The applicant proposes a 15% increase in the FAR.

The Board indicated that additional studies and examination of the bulk and scale considerations outlined above, as well as more information regarding the Living Building imperatives as related to height are warranted before they can provide direction regarding such a departure request. (A-5, A-7, B-1)

Commercial Code Departure:

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure 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 departures. The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

- 3. Setbacks (23.47A.014.B):** The Code requires a setback of a 2' for every 10' of height above 40' when the proposal is located across from a residential zone. The applicant proposes to provide a 15' setback from grade to the top of the building. This would provide a 15' setback where none is required for the first 40' of building height, but encroach into a required setback near the top of the structure.

The Board was concerned about the proposed departure's effect on the nearby properties, as described in the guidance. The applicant should demonstrate how the proposed design better meets the intent of the design review guidelines. More information is needed to describe the proposed development response to conditions at the alley. (A-5, B-1, C-2)

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.