City of Seattle

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

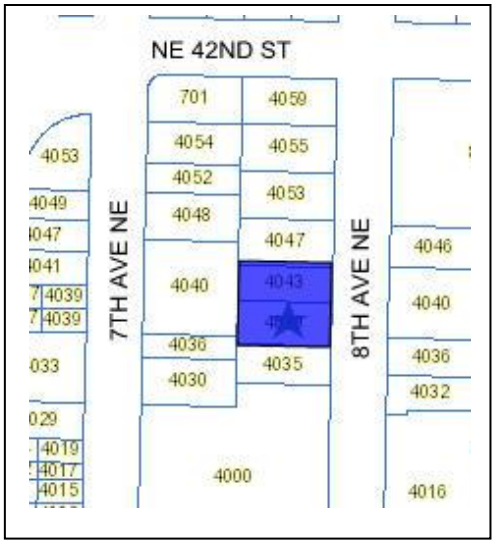
FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number:	3013403
Address:	4039 Eighth Avenue Northeast
Applicant:	Matt Driscoll
Date of Meeting:	Monday, September 23, 2013
Board Members Present:	Ivana Begley Salone Habibuddin Joe Hurley Christina Pizana Martine Zettle
DPD Staff Present:	Bruce P. Rips

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Lowrise Three (LR3)

Nearby Zoning: LR3 zoning extends from I-5 on the west to 9th Ave NE on the east. NE 40th forms the border on the south and the zone ends between NE 43rd and NE 45th Streets. Single Family 5000 occupies the area immediate to the west of I-5. Commercial One with a 65' height limit fronts Roosevelt Way NE. South of NE 40th St. sits an area of Industrial Commercial (IC) with a Major Institutional Overlay.



Lot Description:	The nearly square shaped property has a total of 8,501 sq. ft. and a depth of 100'. The site's declension begins at the northeast corner and slopes toward the southwest by approximately 17'.
Current Development:	A triplex and a duplex on two parcels.
Access:	Eighth Avenue Northeast
Surrounding Development & Neighborhood Character:	A diverse neighborhood the University District has a wide array of building types including single family houses, townhouses and midrise residential buildings in the project vicinity. On the same block to the north lie a rooming house (built in 2009), the University P-patch and a King County Metro facility. DPD is reviewing a proposal (MUP # 3012892) for another apartment building to the north on the same block face. The western edge of the University of Washington sits two blocks to the east. Major arterials include NE 45th St. to the north, I-5 a block to the west, and NE 40th to the south.
ECAs:	No mapped environmentally critical areas.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes a five-story, 59 unit residential structure. There would not be parking. Two structures on the subject parcels would be demolished.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The applicant submitted three massing options. Commonalities of the alternatives include four to five-floors, no parking, minimum of seven foot side setbacks from the property line, 15 foot rear setbacks, placement of solid waste storage fronting Eighth Ave NE, and a resident open space on the roof. In plan, Option One resembles an H-shape with two, four-floor columns of units flanking a recessed entry on Eighth Ave. Another set of units would flank a small open space facing west. A roof deck would extend over the western court.

Option Two forms an elongated U-shape plan facing west. The entrance, solid waste storage, and four floors of units are pushed toward Eighth Avenue with a slight modulation at the corners. Unlike Option One, an exterior stairs and corridor would serve the dwelling units on the southern half of the structure. A deck would occupy this same southern mass's roof. In plan, this design scenario would have less interior space devoted to lobby and potential amenity space than the other options.

A central courtyard, beginning at level two, characterizes the third massing option. Circulation forms the perimeter of the courtyard separating the units from direct views into the court's interior. A sizeable roof deck covers the southwest portion of the building. Based on the drawings, it appears that the hallways are enclosed within the structure's envelope.

By the Recommendation meeting, the applicant developed the third option or courtyard scheme and eliminated the roof level open space.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Three members of the public affixed their names to the Recommendation meeting sign-in sheet. No members of the public commented on the proposal.

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-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 mediumrise 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.

Deliberation at the early guidance meeting focused on the limited size of the central court. During design development, the architect increased the central open space to create a well proportioned and functional courtyard.

A-3 <u>Entrances Visible from the Street</u>. Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: Another way to emphasize human activity and pedestrian orientation, particularly along Mixed Use Corridors, is to provide clearly identifiable storefront entries. In residential projects, walkways and entries promote visual access and security.

Guidelines:

1. **On Mixed Use Corridors, primary business and residential entrances should be oriented to the commercial street.**
2. **In residential projects, except townhouses, it is generally preferable to have one walkway from the street that can serve several building entrances.**
3. **When a courtyard is proposed for a residential project, the courtyard should have at least one entry from the street.**
4. **In residential projects, front yard fences over four (4) feet in height that reduce visual access and security should be avoided.**

The Board described the primary entry as institutional appearing. The metal gate, the low, unprepossessing canopy, and the timber supports contribute to this assessment. The Board recommends that the applicant redesign this entry adding the following suggestions: raise and provide a more expressive design for the marquee and create a more artistic gate. Consider designing the entry, with attention to the heavy timber supports, as an introduction to the project's quiddity or essence, the courtyard, which has a timber structure. The passage from sidewalk to courtyard should celebrate this experiential pedestrian progression with a more creative solution.

The modest use of fenestration along the entire frontage without differentiation of the varying uses behind the façades contributes to the unalluring presence of the ground plane. The metal security fencing in the side setbacks also reinforces the unwelcoming perception that the building exudes at the street frontage.

A-4 <u>Human Activity</u>. 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.

At the earlier meeting, discussion focused on the accommodation of the tenants' dependence upon bikes as a significant mode of transportation. Noticing that the preponderance of bike storage occurred in the basement of the current proposal, the Board recommended adding covered bike storage near or within the courtyard. See guidance for D-12.

In order to provide "eyes on the street", the Board recommended that a residential unit should be placed at the front of the building rather than the solid waste storage area. See guidance for D-6.

A-6 <u>Transition Between Residence and Street</u>. 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.

A-7 <u>Residential Open Space</u>. 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.**

B. Height, Bulk and Scale

B-1 <u>Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility</u>. 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.

The applicant requested a departure for the maximum length of the portion of the north and south façades within 15 feet of the lot line. The change would lengthen each façade by 4'3" or 4.25 percent. The Board recommended approval of the request. The departure recommendation serves to increase the building mass at the corners.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency. Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.

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.**

Illustrations of the heavy timber supports at the entry and in the courtyard did not depict the joinery and the piece like quality of the assemblage. The architect must develop renderings showing the detailing of the connections. The land use planner will review and approve the design of the heavy timber supports.

D. Pedestrian Environment

D-1 <u>Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances</u>. Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: The University Community would like to encourage, especially on Mixed Use Corridors, the provision of usable, small open spaces, such as gardens, courtyards, or plazas that are visible and/or accessible to the public. Therefore, providing ground-level open space is an important public objective and will improve the quality of both the pedestrian and residential environment.

Guidelines:

1. **On Mixed Use Corridors, consider setting back a portion of the building to provide small pedestrian open spaces with seating amenities. The building façades along the open space must still be pedestrian-oriented.**
2. **On Mixed Use Corridors, entries to upper floor residential uses should be accessed from, but not dominate, the street frontage. On corner locations, the main residential entry should be on the side street with a small courtyard that provides a transition between the entry and the street.**

The Board noted its satisfaction with the simplicity of the courtyard design.

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.**

In plan, the solid waste storage area and the residential unit to its west must be flipped or switched in order to have a residence at the front of the building. A hallway and door linking the storage area to the front of the building for pick-up days is permissible. Due to the need for a corridor wide enough to accommodate dumpsters, the storage area may need to shrink in size. The Board recommends a departure for the storage area's size if the applicant needs it.

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

The perimeter of the site should possess high quality wood fencing. The style may vary; however, no chain link fence or gate should be installed.

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.**

Noting the lack of bicycle accommodation at street level, the Board recommended adding covered bike parking near the perimeter of the courtyard.

E. Landscaping

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

At the previous meeting, the Board asked the applicant to provide more information about the relationship of grade and terrain to the adjacent properties. The issue did not elicit discussion during the Recommendation meeting.

E-2 **<u>Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site</u>. Landscaping, including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture, and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.**

The Board did not suggest changes to the overall landscaping plan.

Recommendations: The recommendations summarized below were based on the plans and models submitted at the September 23, 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 September 23, 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) Redesign the entry with a more a creative solution. Consider the following suggestions: raise and provide a more expressive design for the marquee and design a more artistic gate. Give more design attention to the heavy timber supports as an introduction to the courtyard. (A-3)
2) Add covered bike storage near or within the courtyard. (A-4, D-12)
3) Develop renderings showing the detailing or connections of the heavy timber supports. The land use planner will review and approve the design. (C-4)
4) Locate a residential unit at the front of the building in place of the solid waste storage area. Relocate the solid waste storage area to sit behind this unit with a corridor to the front of the building to enable garbage and recycling pick-up. (A-4, D-6)
5) Design a high quality wood fence for the site's perimeter. The style may vary; however, no chain link fence or gate should be installed. (D-7)

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	RECOMMEND-ATION
1. Structure width and façade length SMC 23.45.527B.1	The maximum combined length of all portions of all facades within 15' of a lot line that is neither a rear lot line nor a street or alley lot line shall not exceed 65% of the length of that lot line.	Increase the façade length on the north elevation by 4'3" or an increase of an additional 4.25% of the overall length.	▪ Additional length would create a larger more useable courtyard. (A-7)	Recommended Approval.
2. Structure width and façade length SMC 23.45.527B.1	The maximum combined length of all portions of all facades within 15' of a lot line that is neither a rear lot line nor a street or alley lot line shall not exceed 65% of the length of that lot line.	Increase the façade length on the south elevation by 4'3" or an increase of an additional 4.25% of the overall length.	▪ Additional length would create a larger more useable courtyard. (A-7)	Recommended Approval.
3. Solid Waste Storage SMC 23.54.040A	375 square feet plus four square feet for each additional unit above 50. 59 units total. 9(4)+375=411 sq. ft.	The amount of change is to be determined.	▪ Recognizing that moving the solid waste storage area away from the front of the building (Condition #4) will require an internal hallway, the Board will accept a departure for the size of the solid waste storage area. (D-6)	Recommended Approval

Ripsb/doc/design review/REC.3013403.docx