



# City of Seattle

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



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3013471

Address: 120 Harvard Avenue East

Applicant: Ron Amundson

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, August 15, 2012

Board Members Present: Dawn Bushnaq (Acting Chair)  
Lisa Plcard  
Chip Wall  
Boting Zhang

Board Members Absent: Ric Cochran  
Wolf Saar

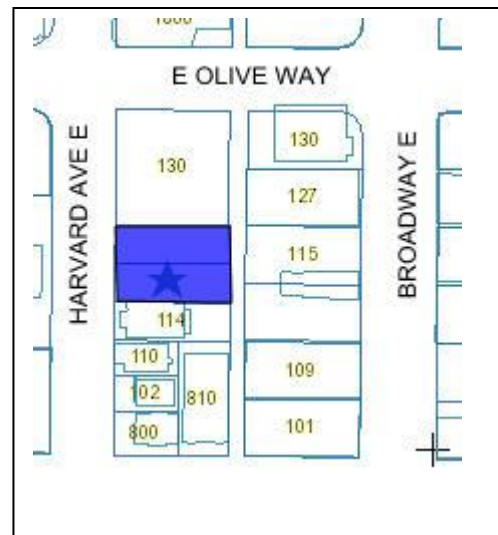
DPD Staff Present: Shelley Bolser

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Midrise Residential Commercial (MR-RC)

Nearby Zones: (North) NC3P-65  
(South) MR-RC  
(East) NC3P-40  
(West) MR

Lot Area: 9,600 square feet



**Current Development:** Existing surface parking lot accessed from the alley. The west property line includes a high bank condition with landscaping separating the sidewalk from the parking lot.

**Access:** Existing and proposed vehicular access is from the alley. Proposed pedestrian access is from the sidewalk at the west façade.

**Surrounding Development:** A newer mixed-use building (The Heights on Capitol Hill West) is located adjacent to the north. An early 20th century residence has been converted to apartments adjacent to the south. Dick's Drive In with surface parking and heavy pedestrian traffic is located to the west across the alley. A range of ages and styles of multi-family buildings are located across Harvard Ave E to the west.

**Neighborhood Character:** This site is located near the future Capitol Hill light rail station, ½ block west of Cal Anderson Park. The street character to the east is dominated by the major commercial corridor of Broadway East. East Olive Way is another busy commercial corridor and is located ½ block to the north. Harvard Ave E fronts the west side of this site and is characterized by quieter multi-family development in a range of ages and styles, between 2-6 stories high. Seattle Central Community College is located a couple of blocks to the south, with the Pike-Pine corridor further to the south. Mobility in the immediate neighborhood is characterized by very heavy pedestrian traffic, frequent transit service, cyclists, and vehicles.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposal is for a seven story (70' tall) residential building containing 39 residential units with parking for 45 vehicles at and below grade, accessed from the alley. The preferred option includes a primary entry at the center of the west façade, with landscaped open space and recessed courtyards near the center of the side north and south of the building core. The design intent is to treat the west portion of the building differently from the east portion of the building, responding to the clear east-west division provided by the open space near the center of the site. The primary residential open space would be located at a roof deck. The existing parking lot would be demolished.

<b>EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: August 15, 2012</b>
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The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number at this website:

[http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design\\_Review\\_Program/Project\\_Reviews/Reports/default.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp).

The packet is also available to view in the DPD 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](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- A public walkway should be provided at the north property line, similar to the existing condition of the informal walkway in that area.
- The front and rear facades should be more traditional and classic in design, consistent with nearby style of Capitol Hill buildings.
- The neighbors to the north are concerned about a potential loss of views from their roof deck.
- Would like to see a building of the same or lower height than the building to the north.
- The location of the elevator overrun may block additional views from the building to the north.
- Brick should be incorporated into the design.
- The proposal should include commercial spaces at grade, given the nearby zoning, the adjacent existing commercial spaces at grade, and the nearby transit station under construction.
- The proposal should not include commercial uses, since Harvard Ave E is a residential street.
- The idea of the existing “guerilla garden” at this site should be incorporated into the design or name of the proposed development.
- Would like to see visual interest in the east façade, like an ‘art project’ hanging down over Broadway.
- The façade treatment should include details such as masonry patterning over the windows.

Staff note: DPD does not have the authority to protect or mitigate views from private property.

## **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:

### 1. EDG Options: (A-2, B-1)

- a. The Board noted that Option 3 (the applicant preferred option) is the best massing approach for the site.

### 2. Massing and Architectural Concept: (A-2, A-6, B-1, C-2, C-3, C-4, D-1, D-8)

- a. The overhanging upper mass at the west façade should be designed to relate to the pedestrian scale. This can be achieved with careful use of materials, incorporation of an awning, and design the entry to maximize light and air below the overhang.
- b. The rhythm of the narrow massing modules at the west façade should be treated with materials to relate to the rhythm of nearby development.
- c. The east façade massing appears to be much wider in scale than the west façade. The east façade should be treated in a creative way that relates to the pedestrian experience ½ block to the east, and the context of Broadway East.
- d. The Board supported the architectural concept of two different treatments for the east and west modules.
- e. The treatment of both east and west modules should include high quality materials such as brick or other materials in context with the nearby neighborhood.

### 3. Setback/Courtyard/Stair: (A-5, C-2, C-4)

- a. The proposed design should enhance the visually interesting opportunity created by the stair/courtyard.
- b. The stair should be designed to allow light to pass through.

### 4. Relationship to the adjacent properties to the north and south: (A-5, D-3, E-2)

- a. The site to the north includes an existing wall at the building base, and the proposed development should respond to this condition.
- b. The site to the south may be redeveloped in the future, but the proposed development should include careful design of any retaining walls and fences near the south property line.
- c. The proposed treatment of the north and south edges seem appropriate to enhance safety and respond to adjacent conditions. The Board noted that the proposed design is preferred over a public pedestrian connection across the site.

The City-wide and Neighborhood specific guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

**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-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-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.

**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.

**Broadway-specific supplemental guidance:**

- Help maintain and enhance the character of Broadway by designing new buildings to reflect the scale of existing buildings.
- Masonry and terra cotta are preferred building materials, although other materials may be used in ways that are compatible with these more traditional materials. The

Broadway Market is an example of a development that blends well with its surroundings and includes a mixture of materials, including masonry.

- The pedestrian orientation of Broadway should be strengthened by designing to accommodate the presence or appearance of small store fronts that meet the sidewalk and where possible provide for an ample sidewalk.

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

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

**Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:**

- Consider: pedestrian-scale lighting, but prevent light spillover onto adjacent properties; architectural lighting to complement the architecture of the structure; transparent windows allowing views into and out of the structure—thus incorporating the “eyes on the street” design approach’
- Provide a clear distinction between pedestrian traffic areas and commercial traffic areas through the use of different paving materials or colors, landscaping, etc.

**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:

- 1. Structure Depth (SMC 23.45.526):** The Code requires a maximum structure depth of 75' of the lot depth, for lots greater than 9,000 square feet in size. The applicant proposes to reduce the structure depth requirement (amount not specified at EDG), to allow for the north and south facing courtyards in the center of the site in response to adjacent residential units.

The Board indicated support for the proposed departure, dependent on the design response to the guidance related to massing, east and west design concepts, quality of materials, and design of the courtyards. (B-1, C-2, C-4, D-1)

- 2. Front Setback (SMC 23.45.518):** The Code requires an average 7' and minimum 5' front setback. The applicant proposes to waive the front setback requirement (amount not specified at EDG), to allow for the below grade garage to extend 2'6" above sidewalk grade at the front property line.

The Board indicated support for the proposed departure, dependent on the design response to the guidance related to street level, entry, and retaining walls. (A-2, A-6)

- 3. Rear Setback (SMC 23.45.518):** The Code requires a 10' rear setback for lots abutting an alley. The applicant proposes to waive the rear setback requirement (amount not specified at EDG), in response to the adjacent NC-zoned properties with no rear setback at the alley. This departure would allow the building mass to be narrower in the center to provide additional light and air to adjacent residential buildings.

The Board indicated support for the proposed departure, dependent on the design response to the guidance related to massing, east and west design concepts, quality of materials, and design of the courtyards. (B-1, C-2, C-4, D-1)

- 4. Side Setbacks (SMC 23.45.518):** The Code requires a side setback of 10' average, 7' minimum, for structures above 42' tall at the side lot lines. The applicant proposes to waive the side setback requirement (amount not specified at EDG) to allow for the parking garage structure to be located adjacent to the existing garage structure at the north property line, rather than create a 7' separation between these two structures. The departure request is also to allow a fence and trellis to screen at-grade parking near the south property line and alley.

The Board indicated support for the proposed departure, depending on the design response to the guidance related to alley facing design, building massing, design of retaining walls and fences adjacent to the south property line, and landscaping. (A-5, B-1, D-3, E-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.**