City of Seattle

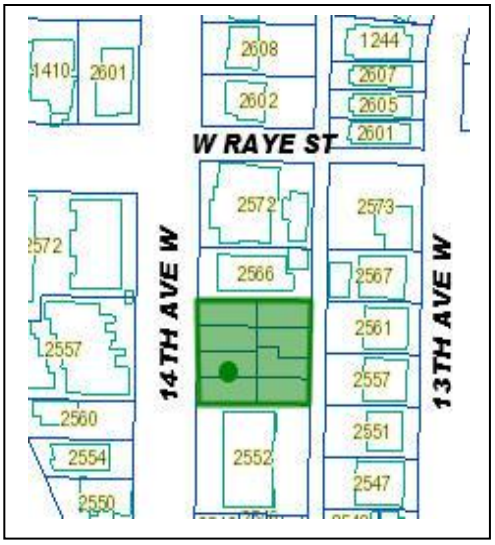
Department of Planning & Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE
QUEEN ANNE/ MAGNOLIA DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number:	30119243013594
Address:	2200 24th Ave E2556 14th Ave W
Applicant:	Neal ThompsonPaul Pierce
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, October 17, 2012
Board Members Present:	Wolf SaarDavid Delfts (Chair) Dawn BushnaqJacob Connell Ric CochranMindy Black
Board Members Absent:	Chip WallJill Kurfirst Lipika Mukerji Magdalena Hogness
Board Members Absent:	Lisa Picard
DPD Staff Present:	Shelley BolserLindsay King

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone:	Lowrise Three (LR3)
Nearby Zones:	(North) Lowrise Three (LR3) (South) Lowrise Three (LR3) (West) Single Family (SF5000) (East) Lowrise Three (LR3)
Lot Area:	12,027 sq. ft.



Current Development:	The existing site is vacant with grass and a few ornamental trees and shrubs. The site slopes approximately 30 feet down from the alley to 14th Ave W.
Access:	The site is bordered by an alley on the east and 14th Ave W on the west.
Surrounding Development:	Surrounding development includes predominantly three to four story multi-family buildings with a few single family structures nearby. Most of the buildings have covered surface parking at the alley, and/or tuck-under structured parking accessed from 14th Ave W.
ECAs:	The site is located in a Potential Slide Environmentally Critical Area, and a 1000' Abandoned Landfill Methane Buffer Environmentally Critical Area. These ECAs require DPD Geotechnical review.
	The area is characterized by a steady slope from the top of Queen Anne hill on the east, down to the Interbay area to the west. The immediate vicinity is dominated by 3-4 story multi-family structures constructed from approximately 1950 to the present. A few single family structures are located nearby. The architectural character is varied.
	14th Ave W is a split street, separated by a vegetated embankment. A pedestrian stair crosses this embankment at W. Raye Street, north of the site. Although 14th Ave W is split, there is no indication that the street is a one-way street on either side of the split.
Neighborhood Character:	The platting pattern in this area is irregular and follows the hillside. The blocks are relatively long measured north-south, and the alleys don't always intersect with the streets at a 90 degree angle. The alley behind this site is accessed via two entries from Gilman Drive W. and 13th Ave W. to the south, or Prosch Ave W. to the north.
	The area includes sidewalk, curb, and gutter, and appears to have a high level of pedestrian activity in spite of the narrow sidewalks. Frequent transit service is located at 15th Ave W, one block to the west.
	The slopes in this area offer views to the west, including Elliott Bay to the southwest.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Design Review Early Design Guidance application for 1-5 unit three story townhouse building, and 2-2 unit three story townhouse buildings (total of 9 units) in an environmentally critical area. Surface parking for 9 vehicles to be provided.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: October 17, 2012

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3013254) 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 Address: **Public Resource Center**
700 5th Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

- Maximize landscaping and greenery on site and rooftops.
- Insufficient parking provided.
- Clarify height and location of rooftop railing and stair penthouse.
- Clarify location of proposed setbacks.
- Incorporate feature to minimize noise impacts from courtyard, rooftop and units to adjacent residential buildings.
- Upgrade alley treatment and minimize use of large trucks within the alley right-of-way.
- Provide solid wood fence with landscaping buffer at ground level on north and south property line to provide privacy adjacent ground level units.
- Provide a front setback more consistent with location of adjacent structures.
- Prefer proposed design to previous projects proposed on site.

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. **Massing Compatibility. The preferred massing alternative divides nine units into three separate structures, allowing each structure to relate to the sloping grade on site.**

a. Maintain three separate structures, separated by courtyard, to reduce the overall massing of the nine unit townhouse development, allowing for additional light and air for adjacent residential structures (A-1, A-5, B1).

b. Townhouse entries along the front façade are distinguished by vertical wood modulation bordered by a dark frame. Maintain the façade treatment which clearly divides the substantial façade length into five defined residential units (B-1, A-3).

c. Continue use of horizontal tripartite building design reducing building height into smaller units (A-1).

d. Subject proposal provides a 13 foot setback on the front façade, substantially larger than the code required 7 foot setback. Maintain the increased setback to create a generous street front edge more consistent with adjacent setback on either side of the proposed development (A-1, A-2, A-6).

2. Maximize Privacy. The development is located adjacent to a number of residential structures which may impact privacy.

a. Locate a solid wood fence with structured green screen along the north and south property line. Setback area should include sufficient space for landscaping, irrigation, a pedestrian pathway and green screen (A-5).

b. Allow the windows on the adjacent residential structures on the north and south structures to inform location of proposed windows. Locate windows to minimize direct line of site into existing windows (A-5).

c. Setback the guardrail and usable rooftop deck area from the north and south facades to maintain privacy for adjacent residents. The setback area should include a landscape planter (A-5).

d. Investigate use of landscaping on rooftop by adding a planting buffer between rooftop amenity areas (A-7, E-2).

3. Further Development within the Setbacks. Setbacks provided at the perimeter of the site should provide usable outdoor rooms for residents while also acting as a transition area to adjacent uses.

a. Design multiple pedestrian access walkways from 14th Avenue W to units. Design walkways to channel pedestrian traffic to the north and south edge of site in an effort to minimize pedestrian flow in front of street facing units (A-6, C-3, D-5)

b. Develop front setback to include sufficient space for landscaping, retaining wall, stair well, and pedestrian pathways (A-6, E-2).

c. Where primary pedestrian corridors are adjacent to residential windows utilize landscaping between living space windows and the pathway to create semi-private defensible space (A-6).

d. Minimize height and length of retaining wall on front property line. Where retaining walls exist, create a friendly pedestrian experience by incorporating falling or climbing landscaping, or scored concrete (D-3).

e. Provide clear signage along the street for residential units at the rear of the site (A-3).

4. **Maximize Landscaping. Utilize landscaping in setback, within the courtyard and on rooftop where possible.**

FINAL RECOMMENDATION MEETING: April 10, 2013

The packet includes materials presented at the Recommendation 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

or contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

Address: **Public Resource Center**
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
Seattle, WA 98124

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Approximately 2 members of the public attended the Recommendation meeting held on April 10, 2012. The following comments were offered:

- Concerned about height of building and potential shadow impacts on the roof of the structure directly north.
- Prefer tall fence along the south property line to provide privacy for ground level units. Encourage evergreen planting along the property line to provide year round screening.
- Prefer new terraced retaining wall along the front lot line.
- Concerned existing alley cannot support construction equipment and vehicles. The alley has low overhead clearance due to existing trees and also lacks sufficient turn around space.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

At the Recommendation meeting, the Board discussed the response to the EDG and offered the following recommendations for the proposal to meet the applicable Design Review Guidelines identified at the EDG meeting.

1. **Massing and Site Planning**
   a. The Board appreciated the nine townhouse units divided into three separate buildings surrounding a central courtyard space. Pedestrians are encouraged to utilize the courtyard, creating opportunities for residents to congregate and socialize within the site (A-1, A-7).

2. **Materials**
   a. The Board felt the building design concept and material application created a "handsome building" (C-2, C-4).
   b. The Board appreciated the 6 inch material 'ribbon' framing each vertical residential entry, the building base and roof parapet. The ribbon clearly articulates the identity of each unit while also dividing the façade into smaller residential scale pieces (B-1, C-2, C-4).
   c. The Board appreciated the use of warmer wood material denoting a 'point-of-entry' throughout the development (C-2, C-4).
   d. The Board was concerned about the material application on the north façade of the northwest corner unit. The Board felt the façade lacked the design continuity represented throughout the remainder of the development. The material application should be resolved with the same design consistency and eye to composition as the remainder o f the side facades (C-2, C-4).

3. **Privacy**
   a. The Board noted the window overlay diagram and appreciated the efforts to locate buildings, the central courtyard and windows to minimize privacy intrusion to adjacent residential units (A-1, A-5).
   b. The Board would like to see a privacy fence on the north and south property lines incorporating year round evergreen material. The Board noted the fence should include sufficient solid material to provide screening between ground level units and the pedestrian traffic on common pathways until planting material reaches maturity (A-5).

4. **Front Setback**
   a. The Board appreciated the retaining wall modifications within the front setback. The revised proposal reduces the scale of the 8' foot tall, 100 foot wide retaining wall by incorporating multiple entry points and human-scale wall terraces. The Board celebrated the dense climbing and falling landscaping used to soften the concrete structures (A-2, C-3, D-3).

b. The Board encouraged further study of the landscaping palette used in the wall terraces to ensure the plants will flourish within the provided width and depth. The Board noted the success of the wall terrace was largely depended upon the ability to achieve the "lushness" of landscaping demonstrated within the recommendation packet (E-2).
c. The Board noted the landscaping buffer located between front facing units and the common pathways was consistent with the provided Early Design Guidance (A-2).

5. **Rooftop treatment**
   a. The Board was concerned the rooftop landscaping could add substantial height and bulk at roof level, effectively increasing the perceived structure mass. The Board encouraged the applicant to select rooftop planting allowing visual permeability to the wood stair penthouse (B-1, C-2, C-4).
   b. The revised rooftop planting should maintain the 2' planter setback on the north and south wall, which provides privacy from roof decks to adjacent residential units (A-5).

6. **Way-Finding Signage**
   a. The Board noted the lighting provided on the front terrace was not aligned with unit way-finding signage. The Board encouraged the applicant to locate lighting to illuminate both the staircase and the signage along the street (A-3, D-7).

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

None.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation summarized below was based on the design review packet dated march 14, 2013, and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the April 10, 2013, Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, the four Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design. The Board recommends the following CONDITIONS (Authority referred in the letter and number in parenthesis):

1. Resolve the material application on the north façade of the northwest corner unit. The material application should demonstrate the same design consistency and eye to composition as the remainder of the side facades.

2. Provide a privacy fence on the north and south property lines incorporating year round evergreen material. Demonstrate provided fence includes sufficient solid material to provide for screening between ground level units and the pedestrian traffic on common pathways until planting material reaches maturity.
3. Choose landscaping for the terrace retaining walls system which will flourish within the space provided and achieve the "lushness" of landscaping demonstrated within the recommendation packet.
4. Provide evidence the proposed landscaping on the rooftop will not add height and bulk to the building massing, while also allowing visual permeability to the rooftop penthouse.
5. Modify plans to locate proposed lighting to illuminate both the front staircase and the unit signage along the street.

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

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.**

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.	**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. C. Architectural Elements and Materials

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.**

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.**

D. Pedestrian Environment

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-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-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.**

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.**

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.**