



Current Development: A 2-story commercial structure occupies the south half of the parcel, and the remainder is surface parking. An approximately 10 ft high concrete retaining wall is on the west property line of the surface parking, with raised parcels beyond.

Access: No alley; vehicle and pedestrian access from adjacent Roosevelt Way NE.

Surrounding Development: 1-2 story commercial structures in the NC3-65 zone adjacent, and across Roosevelt Way NE. 2-3 story residential structures adjacent to the west.

ECAs: None

Neighborhood Character: A mix of older commercial structures of various scale and styles to the east and south, with residential structures to the west. University playground is one block west, a Library is one block north, and diverse services are located within walking distance to the east and south.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes to demolish the existing commercial building and construct a 6 story structure of approximately 41,000 sf, including about 60 units, and approx. 14 parking spaces and about 1400 sf of commercial at the ground level, and an amenity roof deck.

**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: September 23, 2013**

## DESIGN PROPOSAL

The EDG Design Proposal booklet 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 booklet is also available to view in the DPD file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at:

**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

Approximately 10 members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Concerned about safety and security, especially at the deep street level alcoves shown.
- Suggested maximizing greenery and landscape features wherever possible.
- Supported the deep modulation shown on the west façade as a good response to the zone change at the west property line.
- Suggested the ‘parking gap’ at the west edge be capped to create a usable deck that would be level with the adjacent grade.
- Encouraged the project to include more parking spaces.
- Concerned with drainage and storm water management at the retaining wall condition. [Applicant responded that city codes and requirements fully address that issue].

## 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 (the Board) provided the following siting and design guidance. The Board identified the following **Citywide Design Guidelines** & **University Community specific guidelines** (*in italics*) of highest priority for this project, while all guidelines remain applicable.

The priority guidelines are summarized below. For the full text of all guidelines please visit the [Design Review website](#).

### A. Site Planning

**A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street.** 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.*

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed how the residential lobby should be distinctive and identifiable from the commercial storefronts adjacent, and aspects of that identity might carry up the very visible northeast corner of the building, beyond the ground level. They suggested double doors at the lobby, and that a canopy might be different or mounted higher. They also advised the lobby (and storefronts) be highly transparent with glazing as low as possible, to improve eyes-on-the-street security.**

- A-4** **Human Activity.** 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 Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the ground level street interface at length, and agreed the 3 ft sidewalk setback should NOT be filled with landscape elements, but provide continuous walking space to the building edge. To complement, the curbside planter strip should be generous, mostly continuous and contain a rich variety of plantings, to provide a pedestrian buffer on a busy street. Select planter(s) at the recessed lobby entrance would help distinguish it, but should not diminish the walking width or safety.**

- 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.

***University-specific supplemental guidance:***

*Context: This Citywide Design Guideline is particularly important where a building's back side, service areas or parking lots could impact adjacent residential uses. Map 2 (page 8) shows potential impact areas—these are where Lowrise zones abut commercial zones.*

*Guideline: Special attention should be paid to projects in the zone edge areas as depicted in Map 2 to ensure impacts to Lowrise zones are minimized as described in A-5 of the Citywide Design Guidelines.*

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed the proposed open gap at the west parking level would create a moat-like space adjacent to the residential neighbors, create security issues and a visual discontinuity. The Board suggested a cap over the entire west portion of parking to the property line, which would screen the cars, minimize hideouts/security issues, and provide a possible amenity deck at that level. Also see comments under B-1 and Departures, for discussion of the façade above the parking.**

- 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.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed while no residential units are at grade, safety and transparency are primary considerations for the entire ground level façade. See A-3, A-4 and A-8.**

- A-7 Residential Open Space.** 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.*

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board appreciated the proposed green screen and vines for privacy protection along the west parapet, but requested more detailed information on the roof amenity space, including seating, plant species and other social programming features. As the only common outdoor space, it currently appears very minimal and un-inviting.

- 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.

***University-specific supplemental guidance:***

*Context: In Lowrise residential developments, single-lane driveways (approximately 12 feet in width) are preferred over wide or multiple driveways where feasible.*

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed the deeply recessed parking portal shown on pg 24 created a weak street wall and security issues. The Board encouraged that portal be as close to the street as sight triangles allow, have transparent sidewalls (and/or mirrors) for pedestrian visibility, and integrate an attractive door design and material compatible with the adjacent storefront. To address the car queuing concern, high-speed overhead doors are available. The retail bike racks could be located in the curbside zone.

<b>B. Height, Bulk and Scale</b>
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- 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.

***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.*

**[NOTE: the project IS located in a designated impact area: “west of Roosevelt Way NE, north of NE 47<sup>th</sup> Street”]**

*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.*

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board applauded the preliminary massing of the applicant-preferred scheme shown on pages 22 and 27, especially the modulation and material variety on the side walls, and the stepped form and modulation on the west façade facing the LR zone. Also see Departure discussion.**

## **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.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board endorsed the modulations which afford side wall corner windows, and the reading of a harmonious four-sided form (not simply 2 facades), which might be visible like this for the foreseeable future.**

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

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board endorsed the different materials shown and the scale they create, and supported additional studies to ensure the entire ground floor and storefronts achieve good scale. The Board also suggested more balconies and other scale-giving elements be explored.**

**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.*

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board supported the asymmetrical composition, end wall modulations, and the variety and distribution of the cladding materials shown in the preferred scheme, and endorsed the canopies and masonry base materials shown. The Board encouraged further development of these attributes, with special emphasis on the quality, durability and details at material/plane changes, and on the entire street facing ground level.**

## **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.

***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.*

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed the city-required 3 foot setback should be left open, for pedestrian walking and storefront interface. See comments under A-4.**

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

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board strongly agreed lighting, transparency and good design for safety and security are essential at this location, and they requested detailed lighting plans, including fixtures and locations for the entire building perimeter. Also see comments about the ground level plan and alcoves under A-8.**

- 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.

**See Board comments under A-3.**

- 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.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed the lobby doors in this location should prioritize safety and transparency to ensure security (see A-3 and A-4), but a small planter or green wall element to identify and soften the lobby entry could be integrated.**

## **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.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board advised more landscape variety and density be added to the roof deck, and possibly to the amenity cap over the parking gap. Also see comments under A-5 and A-7.**

### **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. Reduce Minimum Depth of Street Level Commercial (SMC 23.47A.008.B.3):** The Code requires an average commercial depth of 30 ft min. The applicant-preferred scheme proposes a minimum depth of 28 ft at all locations.

**The Board indicated non-support for reducing the code required depth, since they agree creating viable commercial is critical at this transitional location. They suggested shifting the commercial wall and parking stalls behind it, 2 ft west to fill in the proposed planter at the west property line, which they agreed did not warrant a less-than 30ft commercial; and/or reducing some of the (non-required) parking stall depths.**

- 2. Reduce Setbacks abutting Residential Zones (SMC 23.47A.014.B.3):** The Code requires a stepped setback at the west property line of 15 ft above 13 ft, then sloping to a point of 20 ft at the top of the 65 ft parapet. The applicant-preferred scheme proposes a complex set of modulated planes on the west façade, with 2 smaller planes encroaching 2 ft into the 15 ft setback, and the majority of the façade setback 18-19 ft (more than minimum required at most locations).

The Board indicated early support for this request, as long as it follows the specific dimensions and composition shown on pg 26 and the renderings, with the inclusion of railings, material changes and other scale devices. The Board agreed this variety of stepped planes and modulation is a superior response to the adjacent zoning, than a pure reflection of the code setbacks.

- 3. Reduce or Waive Required Screening for Parking Abutting Residential Zone (SMC 23.47A.016.D.1.c.2):** The code requires a 6 ft high screen along ground level parking. The applicant proposes this parking is already screened by the existing retaining wall and 10 ft higher grade change at the location abutting residential, thus an additional screen is redundant.

The Board indicated early support for this departure, if it is indeed in effect and needed, given the existing stepped grade condition. Future graphics should provide evidence that the screening objective of the design guidelines is satisfied.

#### **BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the EDG meeting, the Board unanimously recommended the project should move forwards to MUP Application in response to the guidance provided at this meeting.