



### EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE SOUTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3013904

Address: 1366 31st Ave S

Applicant: Mary Rowe

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, November 27, 2012

Board Members Present: Sam Cameron (Chair)  
Tony Case  
Amoreena Miller  
Benjamin Smith  
Stephen Yamada-Heidner

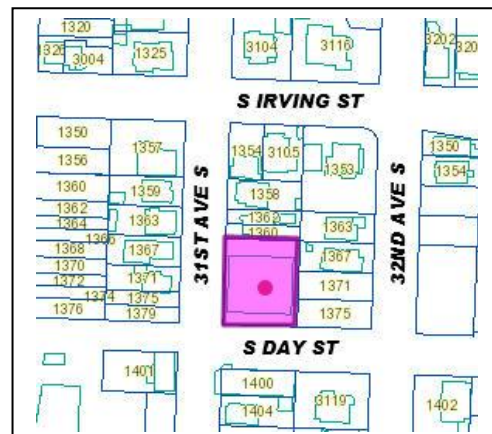
DPD Staff Present: Beth Hartwick, Senior Land Use Planner

#### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial 1-30 (NC1-30)

Nearby Zones: North: Directly north of the site the zoning is LR1.  
South: Along 31<sup>st</sup> Ave S the block to the south is zoned NC1-30. Further south the zoning is Single Family 5000.  
East: Directly to the east the area is zoned Single Family 5000  
West: Across 31st Ave S the zoning is NC1-30.

Lot Area: 11,500 square feet



Current Development:	The site is currently vacant. There are thick hedges along the north and east lot lines, a mature evergreen tree at the NW corner, and three deciduous trees along the southern side of the lot. The site is relatively flat with a grade change of about two feet from the high point at the NW corner and the low point at the SE corner.
Access:	The site fronts on 31st Ave S and S. Day St. There is an existing curb cut along 31st Ave S left over from past development of the site.
Surrounding Development:	The currently vacant site abuts properties with townhouses to the north and single family houses to the east. Across Day St. S is a single story brick faced commercial building and the Thompson/LaTurner House built in 1900 which is a historical landmark. Recently built townhouses, and single family houses are located on the west side of 31st Ave. S.
ECAs:	None
Neighborhood Character:	The site is located in the Mt. Baker neighborhood on a ridge that commands views to both the east and west. Large stately houses and a few commercial building date to the early 1900's. Newer development includes townhouses and commercial structures. Ridge Viewpoint Park provides an overlook and views to the west. The I-90 tunnel and Mountain to Sound trail run underneath; a pedestrian connection is located on S Day Street.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a three story apartment building with 18-22 residential units located on two floors above retail space and enclosed parking at grade, for approximately 24 spaces. Access to parking is from S Day Street.

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## DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Three alternative design schemes were presented.

The first scheme (A) meets all code requirements, except parking aisle width. This scheme proposed a solid rectangular massing that fills the site except for required setbacks. The residential entry is located off S Day Street. Three retail spaces front on 31st Ave. S.

The second scheme (B) was presented as the preferred scheme. This scheme cracks open the massing and provides a narrow entry courtyard between the east and west facing units on the 2nd and 3rd floors. The residential entry is located off S Day Street and three retail spaces front on 31st Ave. S. Departures include a reduced parking aisle width and screening of street level enclosed parking with another use.

The third scheme (C) provided a three story rectangular setback along the middle of the 31<sup>st</sup> Ave S facing façade. The residential entry is located off this small courtyard. Two retail spaces flank the entry lobby. This scheme proposes 18 residential units. Departures include a reduced parking aisle width and a reduced setback for the residential floors along the north property line.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Approximately 16 members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- The majority of the comments were in support of the project.
- Concern for privacy of neighbors to the north; would like existing hedges to remain; suggested build a two story building instead of three; stated garbage collection should not happen along north property line.
- Stated that the trees on site should remain.

## **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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting the Board indicated this guideline as highest priority but made no specific comments.

#### **A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street. Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting the Board identified this guideline as highest priority but made no specific comments.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board identified this guideline as highest priority but made no specific comments.

- 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board stated concerns with minimizing the required upper story residential setback along the North property line in Scheme C.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed that they would like to see more landscaping at the residential entry.

- 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board was concerned that the parking entry off of S Day street is too prominent and its appearance should be minimized. See Guideline C-5.

- A-10 Corner Lots. Building on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board briefly discussed the potential treatment of the corner of the structure at 31<sup>st</sup> Ave S and S Day St. The Board encouraged a corner design that is activated but not be overly prominent in the overall design of the structure.

## **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.**

At The Early Design Guidance Meeting the Board indicated this guideline as highest priority but made no specific comments.

## **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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted this guideline as highest priority and it will be reviewed at the Recommendation phase.

- 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 noted this guideline as highest priority and it will be reviewed at the Recommendation phase.

- 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 indicated this guideline as highest priority but made no specific comments.

- 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed that they would like the exterior building materials to match the materials of the existing structures in the surrounding neighborhood commercial zone.

- C-5 Structured Parking Entrances. The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed this item at length. The Board strongly encouraged the applicant to minimize the visual appearance of the parking garage entry off S Day St. Options to consider are requesting a departure from the sight triangle and tightening up the entry; consider 'pushing' the parking back into the building by providing fewer parking spaces. See Departures for further comments.

## **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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted this guideline as highest priority and will expect to review this issue at the Recommendation phase.

- 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board voiced concern over the proposed blank walls that abut the north and east properties. They would like the applicant to investigate ways to provide visual interest or screen the walls.

- 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board stated that screening of dumpsters and service areas was of high importance and will review how this is achieved at the Recommendation meeting.

- 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 stated that the commercial frontage should be designed to provide a strong presence of security.

- 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board stated they want uniform signage concept plan that will “pull” pedestrians toward the retail spaces.

- 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting the Board indicated this guideline as highest priority but made no specific comments. See D-7.

- 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted this guideline as highest priority and will expect to review this issue at the Recommendation phase.

- 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 stated that they would like to see more detail of this area. Landscaping should be provided at the residential entry.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board stated that they would like the applicant to investigate saving the tree at the NW corner of the lot.

- 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 stated they wanted to see more landscaping at the residential entry.

### **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 three departures were requested:

- 1. Parking Space Standards (SMC 23.54.030E)** The Land Use Code requires a 22' parking aisle width for medium sized vehicles. The applicant is asking for a 20' wide aisle.

The Board is generally supportive of this departure but needs additional justification for why it should be granted.

2. **Parking Location & Access (SMC 23.47A.032B1b)** The Land Use Code requires that when parking is provided within a structure the street level parking shall be separated from the street-level street facing facade by another permitted use. The applicant has requested to provide screening between the street and parking instead of another use.

The Board stated that they needed more information on what the screening would look like before they can vote in favor of such a departure. They would like to see more detail of the pedestrian and vehicular entries along S Day Street. The Board suggested that the applicant request a departure from required sight triangles.

3. **Setback Requirements (SMC 23.47A.014B3a)** For a residential structure, a setback is required where it abuts a residential zone. The setback is 15' for portions of the structure higher than 13' up to 40' in height. The applicant is proposing a 10' setback at the north property line abutting an LR1 zone.

The Board is not inclined to support this departure requested in Scheme C.

## **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.**

The Board preferred Scheme B and encourages the development team to move forward with the courtyard concept and the guidance provided in this report.