



City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director



FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE SOUTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3013904

Address: 1366 31st Ave S

Applicant: Ginger Garff, Johnston Architects

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, August 06, 2013

Board Members Present: Sam Cameron (Chair)
Tony Case
Stephen Yamada-Heidner
Benjamin Smith
Michele Wang- substitute

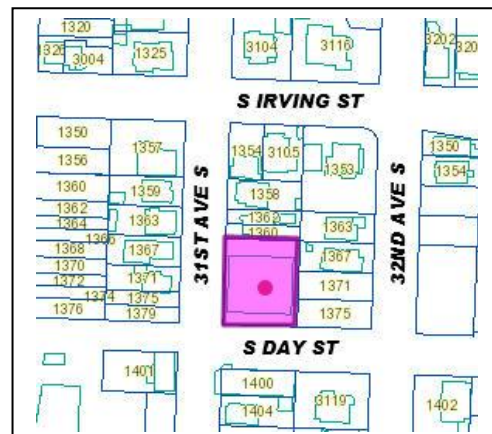
DPD Staff Present: Beth Hartwick, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

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

Nearby Zones: North: Directly north of the site the zoning is LR1.
South: Along 31st 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 mixed use building with 18 residential units located on two floors above approximately 5,000 sq. ft. of retail space and enclosed parking at grade, for approximately 21 spaces. Access to parking is from S Day Street.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: November 27, 2012

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 31st 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.

The EDG packet includes materials presented at the EDG meeting, and is available online by entering the project number 3013904 at this website:

<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/aboutus/news/events/DesignReview/SearchPastReviews/default.asp>

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.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION MEETING: August 6, 2013

At the EDG Meeting the Board had encouraged the applicant to move forward with the courtyard concept, Scheme B, and the guidance provided in the EDG report. At the Recommendation Meeting the applicant described the development of the project in response to the Boards guidance.

Additional landscaping was added at the residential entry along S Day St. The residential stair was shown screened by rusted steel 'sticks' to provide screening and visual interest. The enclosed parking along S. Day St. will be located behind the solid waste storage room and bike parking space. A green wall and plantings will screen the bike parking enclosure.

Building materials will include concrete pilasters at the retail base, box rib metal siding, corten steel and black vinyl windows for the residential units. The 13' high walls at the north and west property lines will be concrete block with an ornamental pattern. Landscaping for the abutting residential properties will be provided to screen the walls. A glass or metal cable railing will be provided above the walls.

The open interior courtyard at the 2nd level will be approximately 15' wide and 22' high. The courtyard will have planters providing landscaping. At the roof, a metal frame will support solar panels over part of the courtyard opening. A landscaped roof deck will provide amenity space for the residents.

The commercial storefronts along 31st Ave S and S Day St. will have a dark color aluminum frame. The blade signage is proposed to be colorful and to draw the public to the retail spaces. A canopy will be provided above the retail storefronts.

The Recommendation packet includes materials presented at the Recommendation meeting, and is available online by entering the project number 3013904 at this website:

<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/aboutus/news/events/DesignReview/SearchPastReviews/default.aspx>

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

- Concerned about the height, bulk and scale of the project along 31st Ave S and the potential impact on access to existing driveways north of the project.
- Concerned about the proposed colors of the project and encouraged more color.
- Stated support for the project and the proposed landscaping.
- Encouraged providing charging stations for electric cars in the garage.
- Encouraged the Board to recommend the project.

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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board stated the project has been successful in addressing this guideline.

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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board stated the project has been successful in addressing this guideline. See Guideline D-12.

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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board stated the project has been successful in addressing this guideline.

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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board stated the project has been successful in addressing this guideline. See Guideline D-2.

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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board stated the project has been successful in addressing this guideline.

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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board encouraged and granted a departure to use mirrors to replace the site triangle function thus reducing the size of the opening into the garage.

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 31st 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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board stated the project has been successful in addressing this guideline.

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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board stated the project has been successful in addressing this guideline.

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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board encouraged the use of material colors to compliment the townhouses across 31st Ave S.

- 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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board asked for further clarification about the orientation and shape of the bays projecting into the right-of-way and were satisfied with the applicant's response of relating to solar access and interior layout of the units.

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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board stated the project has been successful in addressing this guideline.

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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board advised the applicant to carefully consider the proportions of the corten steel elements. They advised the applicant to consider a different pattern of the painted cement panels on the east and north elevations that are meant to mimic the steel panels along the street frontage. The Board encouraged the edge of the street canopy to read as steel.

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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board encouraged and granted a departure to use mirrors to replace the site triangle function thus reducing the size of the opening into the garage.

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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board asked for clarification and stated their concern about weather protection for the residents as access to the units will be from the open courtyard. The applicant clarified that the unit entries will be covered by the floor slabs above them.

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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board indicated they support and encourage the applicant to work with the abutting residential neighbors and to provide landscaping to screen the blank walls along the north and west property lines.

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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board noted the applicant should provide landscaping to mitigate the appearance of the service doors to the solid waste area. See the recommended conditions at the end of the report.

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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board stated the project has been successful in addressing this guideline.

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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board expressed their support of the proposed colorful blade signage for each retail space.

- 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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board expressed their support of the proposed commercial lighting.

- 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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board stated the project has been successful in addressing this guideline.

- 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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board discussed the screening of the open stair at the residential entry, with the vertical steel elements. They suggested providing more space between the vertical elements at the street level. The applicant explained their concern with providing privacy at the lower level; the Board was satisfied with this answer.

E. Landscaping

- 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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board expressed their support of the applicant working with the residents of the abutting residential projects to provide landscaping. See Guideline D-2.

The Board questioned why there was no landscaping being proposed in the right-of-way. The applicant has worked with SDOT who has determined that no street trees or landscaping is required given the limited sidewalk depth and the location of a bus stop on 31st Ave. S.

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.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board encouraged additional landscaping at the southern edge of the interior courtyard. The Board conditioned the project to provide additional landscaping along S. Day St. See Departure #1.

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 recommendation meeting five departures were requested:

1. **Street Level Development Standards (SMC 23.47A.008.B.2)** The Land Use Code requires sixty percent of the street-facing facade between 2 feet and 8 feet above the sidewalk shall be transparent. The applicant is proposing a reduction of transparency along S Day St. from 60% to 55.25%. This is due to enclosing the bike parking area with a solid wall due to security concerns. Instead of an opaque window the applicant is proposing a lush green screen.

This departure would provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines E-2 and D-7 by providing the opportunity for more green and landscaping along S. Day St. while providing security for the bike parking area.

The Board unanimously recommended that DPD grant the departure, subject to the conditions listed at the end of this report.

2. **Setback Requirements (SMC 23.47A.014.B.3)** The Land Use Code requires 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 portion of the east property line wall at the southern corner to be higher than 13' by no more than 11.25". This is due to the grade change on the site and the applicants desire to have a continuous slab at the second level above the 13' first floor.

This departure would provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines A-7 and E-2 by providing a usable deck for open space and landscaping.

The Board unanimously recommended that DPD grant the departure.

3. **Parking Space Standards (SMC 23.54.030.E)** The Land Use Code requires a 22' parking aisle width for medium sized vehicles. The applicant is asking for a 20' wide aisle. This will allow for a more generous depth for the street front retail uses along 31st Ave S.

This departure would provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines A-8 and C-5 by reducing the size of the curb cut and presence of the garage entry along S. Day St.

The Board unanimously recommended that DPD grant the departure.

4. **Site Triangle (SMC 23.54.030.G)** The Land Use Code requires a 10' x 10' site triangle on both sides of a 20' wide two way driveway. The applicant proposed a reduced triangle on both sides. This would allow for a less intrusive garage entry and more space for the solid waste and bike parking uses. The Board felt that given the small number of parking spaces and low vehicle use of S. Day St. the safety of pedestrians at the garage entry would be adequately served by mirrors on each side.

This departure would provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines A-8 and C-5 by reducing the size of the curb cut and presence of the garage entry along S. Day St.

The Board unanimously recommended that DPD grant the departure, subject to the conditions listed at the end of this report.

5. **Setback Requirements (SMC 23.47A.014.B.5)** The Land Use Code requires no openings in facades within 5' of the property line. The applicant has located an emergency exit door with 5' of the north property line.

This departure would provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines A-2 and D-11 by allowing for uninterrupted commercial store frontage along 31st Ave S.

The Board unanimously recommended that DPD grant the departure.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation summarized below was based on the design review packet dated July 9, 2013, and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the August 6, 2013 Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, the five Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design and departures, with the following conditions:

1. Additional landscaping should be provided along S. Day St especially near the solid waste enclosure.
2. The type and location of building materials at the street level facade of S. Day St. should be unified to provide a more cohesive design.
3. Mirrors will be placed at both sides of the garage entry to replace the function of the site triangle.
4. The edge of the steel canopy above the store frontages should have the appearance of steel.
5. The orange painted cement panels at the north and east elevations should enhance those elevations and not mimic the steel panels at the street front elevations.