



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE WEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3014211

Address: 722 3rd Avenue North

Applicant: Mark Wierenga, David Vandervort Architects AIA

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, June 12, 2013

Board Members Present: Jill Kurfirst (Meeting Chair)
Mindy Black
Katherine Idziorek
Boyd Pickrell
Janet Stephenson
Magdalena Hogness

Board Members Absent: None

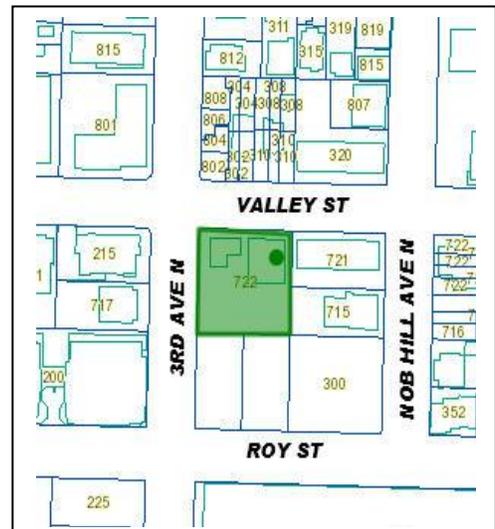
DPD Staff Present: Tami Garrett, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Lowrise 3 (LR3)

Nearby Zones: North: LR3
South: Neighborhood Commercial 3-40
East: LR3
West: LR3

Lot Area: 15,360 square feet (sq. ft.)



Current Development: The project site contains one existing single family residence and a six-unit apartment building.

Access: Vehicular access to the project site is possible from both Valley Street and 3rd Avenue North.

Surrounding Development: Surrounding development includes a mix of townhouse units and apartment buildings east, west and north of the site. A five-story hotel building (Maxwell Hotel) is south of the subject property.

ECAs: The site's existing topography is characterized with grades descending gradually approximately 8' from northwest to southwest with the majority of the slope in vicinity of the current structures on the site. The vacant portion of the site is flat. There are no Environmentally Critical Areas (ECAs) mapped on the site.

Neighborhood Character: The corner project site is located less than a block north of the intersection of 3rd Avenue North and Roy Street and two blocks north of 3rd Avenue North and Mercer Street. The general character of this block along Valley Street is mainly residential and a mix of both commercial and residential along 3rd Avenue North. The neighborhood is very pedestrian-oriented, and within close proximity to the Seattle Center and amenities of the Lower Queen Anne Uptown neighborhood.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is for the design and construction of three buildings consisting of a total of sixteen residential townhouse units. Parking for sixteen vehicles is proposed to be provided within the townhouse units in a below grade parking garage. The existing structures will be removed.

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DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Three alternative design schemes were presented to the Board. The project team's design development goals were to create a design that compliments the horizontal composition common in the area with prominent vertical elements to provide appropriate scale and rhythm. All three options presented included multiple three-story townhouse buildings equating to approximately sixteen townhouse units above a below-grade sixteen stall parking garage with vehicular access occurring from 3rd Avenue North.

The first scheme (Option 1 “East/West Linear Court”) entailed a townhouse development consisting of two building masses: one eight-unit townhouse building front along Valley Street with residential entries from Valley Street; and, an eight-unit townhouse building directly behind with residential entrances facing a proposed amenity court area between the residential buildings. This scheme showed accessory parking and access located entirely in a below grade structure with each unit having its own garage allowing direct access to the unit.

The second and applicant preferred scheme (Option 2 “T-shaped Court”) included a townhouse development consisting of three building masses: an eight-unit townhouse building fronting along and accessed from Valley Street; and two four-unit townhouse buildings with residential entries accessed from a “t-shaped” amenity court area between the structures. Proposed parking design and access was similar to the first scheme.

The third scheme (Option 3 “Common Garage”) also showed three townhouse building masses: an eight-unit townhouse structure located along and entered from Valley Street; a five-unit townhouse structure located internally to the site and accessed from the “t-shaped” amenity area; and, a three-unit townhouse structure abutting 3rd Avenue North with residential entries from 3rd Avenue North. Parking was located entirely below-grade in a common garage inclusive of a stair access from the garage to the amenity court.

The EDG packet includes materials presented at the EDG meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3014211) at this website:

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp.

The EDG packet is also available to view in the project file (project number 3014211), 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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately three members of the public attended this Early Design Guidance Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised (with Board/applicant response in *italics*):

- Clarified the height limit for structures constructed on property zoned LR3.
Height limit for townhouse developments is 30’ and additional height (10’ maximum) is allowed for stair penthouses.
- Inquired about the height of the proposed townhouse building facing Valley Street.

Height is 25' to the open roof decks and an additional 9' for the stair penthouses accessing the roof deck areas.

- Observed that, in recent past, the vacant portion of the subject site had been temporarily utilized for onsite construction worker parking associated with several newly constructed developments (Maxwell Hotel, neighboring townhouse developments). Concerned that construction at the subject site will eliminate the construction employee's parking area; and in turn, will negatively impact on-street parking availability in the neighborhood. Questioned where off-street construction parking is planned to be located.

[Staff Note: Such information/questions should be directed to the DPD discretionary planner (Tami Garrett) in writing once the applicant has submitted his/her Master Use Permit (MUP) application to DPD and the required public comment period has occurred.]

- Concerned that the height of the existing retaining wall near the subject site's south boundary line on the hotel property would negatively affect pedestrian safety in association with the installation of vehicular driveway access stemming from 3rd Avenue North.
Proposal required to provide a view triangle at the garage driveway entrance/exit located on the property.
- Asked about the width of the driveway entrance versus the wider portion of the driveway.
10' then widens to 16'.
- Encouraged future design to include exterior materials similar in type and quality that have been used at specific neighboring residential developments (Merrill Gardens, townhouses at the southeast corner of Nob Hill Avenue North).
- Appreciated the proposed design concepts did not include code departures and included below-grade garage parking.
- Encouraged a design that includes widening of the sidewalk and removal of existing angled parking for that portion of the site that abuts 3rd Avenue North.
- Desired fencing/gates leading to the courtyard are transparent-visible to pedestrian views.
- Encouraged a design that allows for a common solid waste/recycling area be located on the property versus individual dumpsters being hauled onto the sidewalks on waste collection days.

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 of highest priority for this project.

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1. **Design Concept and Massing:** The design and siting of pattern of the new townhouse residential development should respond to specific site conditions, be oriented to the corner, have entrances visible from the street, be compatible with the anticipated scale of development, and complement the architectural character of neighboring residential buildings.

- a. The Board debated the merits of all three design schemes and did not state a preference amongst the options presented by the design team. The Board explained that each design concept had elements that combined would be considered a preferred design scheme. Consequently, the Board did state support for a “hybrid” design to move forward to Master Use Permit (MUP) submittal with following guidance:
 - The proposal must include some form of residential entrances facing onto 3rd Avenue North, in addition to Valley Street in order to create stronger street presence. (A-3, A-6, A-10, D-2)
 - The proposal must include a wider, more communal amenity court. Additional Board discussion/guidance concerning this subject is offered in item #4. (A-3, A-6, A-7)
 - The proposal should include a stronger presence of building massing oriented more closely to the corner of 3rd Avenue North and Valley Street and the public street fronts. The Board recognized that the subject property’s northernmost property line is set back a larger distance farther from the sidewalk edge along Valley Street (10’) in comparison to the adjacent neighboring property to the east. The Board commented that it would support a future code departure request that, in meeting the intent of this design guidance, would situate the northernmost building (Building 1) closer to Valley Street and the corner, in exchange for a wider centralized internal amenity area. The Board stipulated that the amount of code departure granted must equate to an increase in the internal separation of the proposed townhouse buildings (20’ plus the code departure amount). (A-1, A-7, A-10)
 - b. The Board recognized that the subject property is a zone transition site and advised that future proposals should relate to the surrounding residential properties and not to the neighboring commercial buildings south of the property. The Board stated support of the stepped façade (as best illustrated for Building 1 in Option 3) and the positive direction that the design is headed regarding rhythm, pattern and scale. (B-1, C-2, C-4)
 - c. The Board acknowledged that there is some context for higher quality durable materials in the neighborhood and expect to review physical materials at the Recommendation meeting. (C-4)
 - d. The Board complimented the design team for presenting three viable design concepts for the subject property.
2. **Valley Street Frontage:** The design of the new townhouse residential development should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve a good human scale, provide a positive transition between the townhouse entries to the street, and reinforce the spatial characteristic of Valley Street. (A-1, A-6, C-3)
- a. The Board discussed the merits between protecting an existing mature tree within close proximity to the site’s north property line. The applicant wasn’t certain if the tree (Oregon Ash) was situated within the right-of-way; therefore, making SDOT the decision maker concerning tree removal. The Board did acknowledge that further consultation between the applicant’s landscape

architect and the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is necessary before the Board could offer any design feedback. Therefore, the Board requested the applicant to address this requirement directly with SDOT during the initial MUP review process and provide SDOT Urban Forester feedback at the Recommendation meeting. (A-1, E-3)

- b. At the Recommendation meeting, the Board expects to review renderings showing how the townhouse buildings, details, landscaping and design relate to the spatial characteristics of the street. Character sketches and/or sections that illustrate design elements (fencing, landscaping, walls, ramps, stairs, and stoops) that would be visible by pedestrians from the sidewalk should also be offered. (A-1, A-6, D-1, E-2)
3. **3rd Avenue North Frontage:** The design of the new townhouse residential development should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to enhance pedestrian comfort, discourage blank walls, create entrances visible from the street, and reinforce the existing spatial characteristic of 3rd Avenue North. (A-1, A-3, A-6, D-1, D-2)
- a. The Board discussed the merits between protecting an existing mature tree within close proximity to the site's west property line. The applicant wasn't certain if the tree (Horse Chestnut) was located within the right-of-way; therefore, making SDOT the decision maker concerning tree removal. Again, the Board requested the applicant to address this requirement directly with SDOT during the initial MUP review process and provide SDOT Urban Forester feedback at the Recommendation meeting. (A-1, E-3)
 - b. Again, the Board expects to review at the Recommendation meeting, renderings showing how the townhouse buildings, details, landscaping and design relate to the spatial characteristics of the street. Character sketches and/or sections that illustrate design elements (fencing, gates, landscaping, walls, ramps, stairs, and stoops/porches) that would be visible by pedestrians from the sidewalk should also be offered. (A-1, A-6, D-1, E-2)
 - c. The Board stated that proposed fencing/gated entry to the courtyard along 3rd Avenue North should allow for visibility to the courtyard amenity area and residential entrances. The treatment of that opening (materiality, visibility, landscaping, security) should be attractive and enhance the pedestrian experience, not create a solid wall/opaque fence barrier against the street. (A-6, C-4, D-1, E-2)
 - d. The Board acknowledged that the blank walls visible from 3rd Avenue North will need to be addressed. The Board expects to review details pertaining to any landscaping and/or design treatments (green screening, etc.) proposed to address this concern at the Recommendation meeting. (D-2, E-2)
4. **Residential Open Spaces:** The Board felt that a residential design that includes ground-level and upper level amenity spaces which is usable, attractive, well-integrated, significantly landscaped and allows for greater human connectivity between neighbors is required. (A-7, D,-1, E-2)
- a. The Board felt that the centralized courtyard amenity area should be widened internally and be designed as a semi-public inviting space, welcoming to both

residents and visiting guests, and be well landscaped. The Board expects to review access (stairs, ramps, paths) and landscaping elements pertaining to this space at the Recommendation meeting. The Board offered examples of existing residential properties in the vicinity (“Love Israel” at upper Queen Anne (6th Avenue West) and Merrill Gardens) that demonstrate this design successfully. (A-7, D-1, E-2)

- b. The applicant explained that waste/recycling containers would be situated internally and that future screening of the trash/recycling dumpsters is still being explored. The Board supported a design that screened the trash/recycling in an attractive manner away from views into the courtyard and away from the pedestrian right-of-way. The Board also stated a program that allows for the trash collector to access waste/recycling removal onsite versus from the sidewalk is preferred. The Board acknowledged further input from Seattle Public Utilities (SPU)-Solid Waste concerning waste/recycling code requirements and from the waste/recycling collection service provider regarding waste/recycling removal practices available to this site is necessary to address this issue. At the Recommendation meeting, the Board expects to review details/feedback from Seattle Public Utilities (SPU)-Solid Waste division and trash collector concerning a trash/recycling solution that addresses the following key elements:
- Waste/recycling code requirements;
 - Waste/recycling code location;
 - Waste/recycling containment (individual containers vs. dumpsters); and
 - Waste/recycling screening. (A-7, C-2, D-6)

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

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-3 **Entrances Visible from the Street.** Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.
- 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.
- A-7 **Residential Open Space.** Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.
- 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.

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. 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.
- 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.

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.
- 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-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.

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, no departures were requested.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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.