



City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3014339

Address: 605 15th Avenue East

Applicant: Gary Oppenheimer, nk architects for Marc Angelillo

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, April 3, 2013

Board Members Present: Sam Cameron, Substitute from SE Board
 Ric Cochran, Acting chair
 Dan Foltz, Substitute
 Amoreena Miller, Substitute from SE Board
 Chip Wall

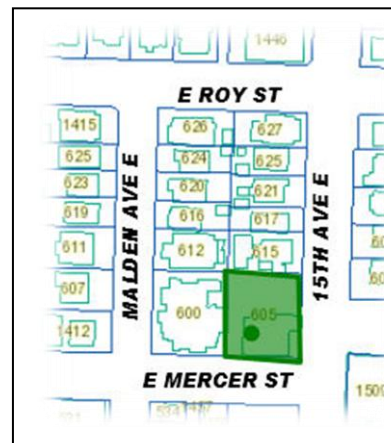
DPD Staff Present: Beth Hartwick, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial 2P-40 (NC2P-40) in the Capitol Hill Urban Center Village

Nearby Zones: North: Lowrise 2 and Single Family 5000.
 South: Neighborhood Commercial 2P-40 and Lowrise 3.
 East: Neighborhood Commercial 2P-40 and Single Family 5000.
 West: Lowrise 3.

Lot Area: 9,317 square feet



Current Development: The site is currently developed with a single story commercial structure built in 1941, occupied by a restaurant. Surface parking is located north of the building.

Access: The site is a corner lot with street frontage along 15th Ave E and E Mercer Street.

Surrounding Development: The subject lot is located at the northern edge of a five block stretch of Neighborhood Commercial zoning along 15th Ave E. To the north and west the site abuts Lowrise zoned parcels. Across 15th Ave to the east and a block north are single family zoned blocks, developed with older Seattle housing stock from the early 1900's. Directly to the north is a duplex structure built in 1903. Across 15th Ave E to the south of E Mercer is a three-story 1907 apartment structure with ground level commercial use. Across 15th Ave E to the north of E Mercer St. is a block of single family residences built at the turn of the 20th century. Directly to the west is a three plus story apartment structure built in 1988. Across E Mercer Street to the south is a single story service station built in 1966.

ECAs: None

Neighborhood Character: 15th Ave E to the south is an active neighborhood commercial street of mostly single story structures built over the past 100 years. Surrounding 15th Ave E is one of Seattle's oldest neighborhoods, with stately homes and brick apartment buildings interspersed with newer development. Old trees and landscaping provide a strong vegetation presence. A few blocks to the north is Volunteer Park. A few blocks to the south is Group Health Cooperative.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for construction of a 4 story mixed-use building with street level commercial space, three stories with approximately 33 apartment units and below grade parking.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: April 3rd, 2013

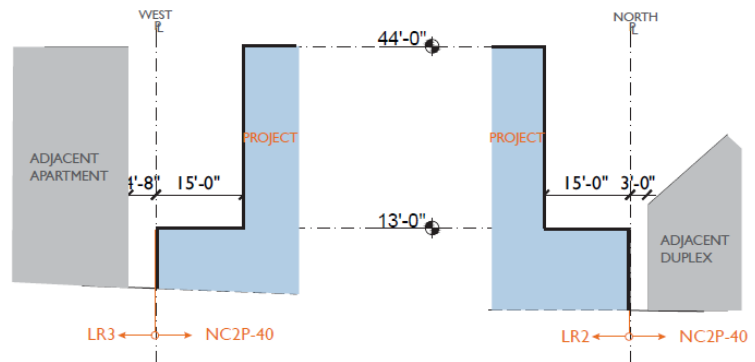
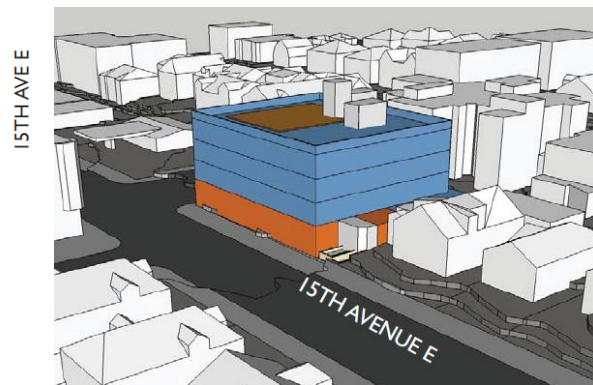
DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Three alternative design schemes for the corner site were presented. The site is relatively flat with no grade change along 15th Ave E and about 4' along E Mercer St. The properties abutting the site to the north and west are in Lowrise residential zones.

The access ramp to below grade parking will be provided off of E Mercer St along the west property line. A green screen will be located along the property line to screen the ramp. During the presentation, the applicant noted that an existing laurel hedge located on site along the north property line is being retained to provide privacy with the structure to the north.

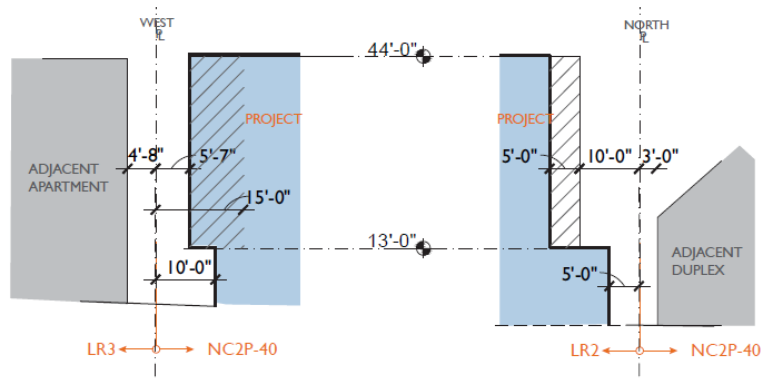
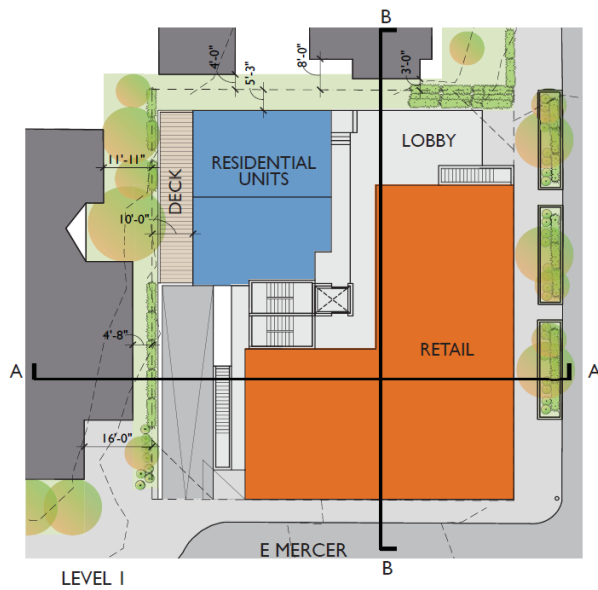
Seattle City Light power lines cut across the intersection of 15th Ave E and E Mercer Street. Unless the lines are relocated the upper story of the proposed structure will need to set back to accommodate a 10' minimum clearance from the lines.

Option 1 consists of 33 residential units, 25 parking spaces and approximately 3,700 square feet of commercial space. This is the code compliant option. The residential entry lobby and ramp to below grade parking are off of E Mercer St. Commercial space fronts 15th Ave E and E Mercer St. taking up approximately half of the ground level interior space. Three residential units are located at ground level. The upper residential levels are set back from the abutting lowrise zoned parcels to the north and west.



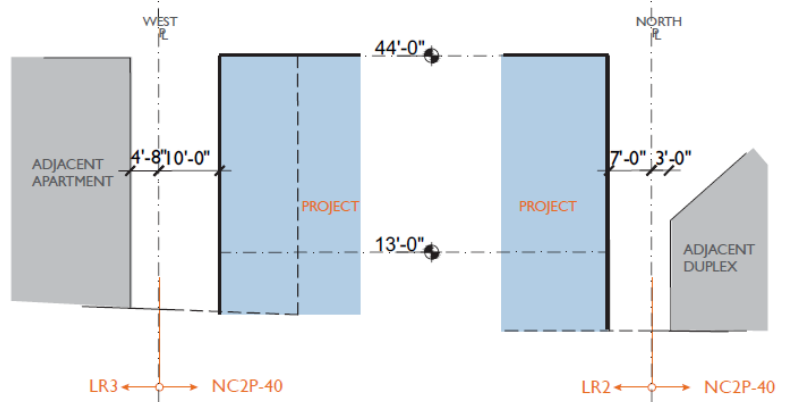
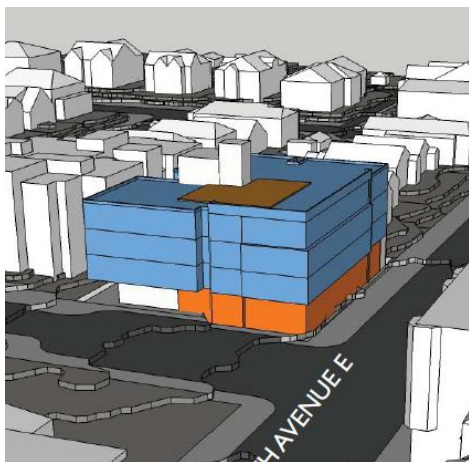
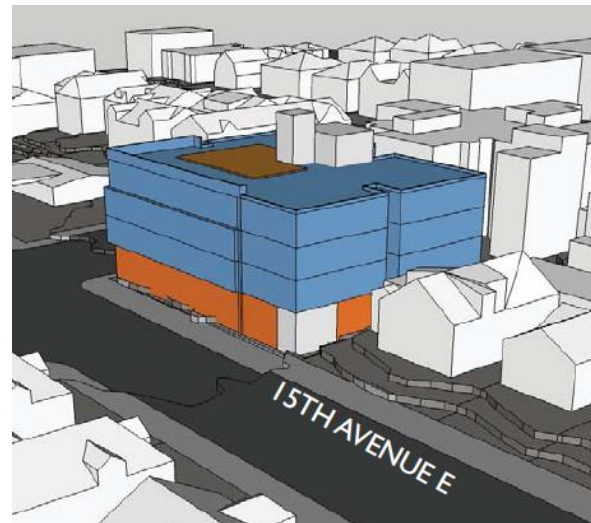
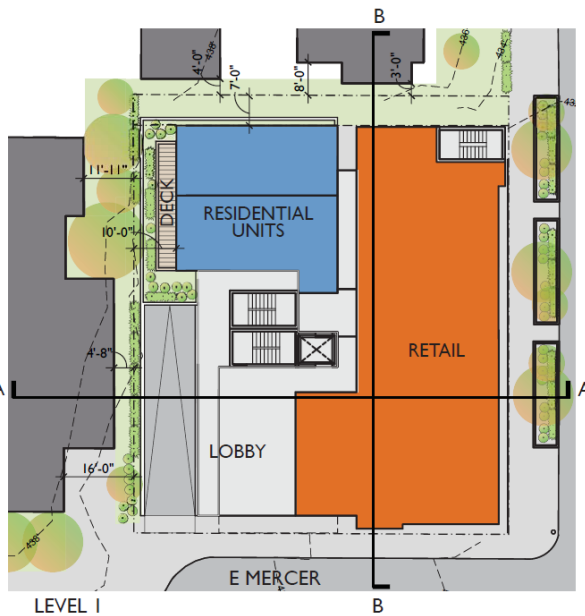
Option 2 proposes 33 residential units, 23 parking spaces and approximately 3,950 square feet of commercial space. The residential entry lobby is located off of 15th Ave E at the northeast corner of the structure. Commercial space fronts 15th Ave E and E Mercer St. The ramp to below grade parking is off of E. Mercer St. Two residential units are located at the ground level. The upper residential stories project into required residential setbacks along the north and west lot lines.

Departures are being requested for residential setbacks along the north and west property lines. See the Development Standards Departure section later in the report.



Option 3 is the applicants preferred scheme. The option proposes 33 residential units, 21 parking spaces and approximately 3,550 square feet of commercial space. The residential entry lobby and ramp to below grade parking are off of E Mercer St. Commercial space fronts 15th Ave E and E Mercer St. taking up approximately half of the ground level interior space. The ground level commercial uses will be set back a few inches from the property line, increasing the width of the sidewalk. Two residential units are located at the ground level. The upper residential stories project into the required residential setbacks along the north and west lot lines.

Departures are being requested for residential setbacks along the north and west property lines and slope of the parking access ramp. See the Development Standards Departure section later in the report.



PUBLIC COMMENT

At this Early Design Review meeting, the following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Concerned project is not relating to the grand Capitol Hill residential architecture or neighborhood character.
- Concerned that the building to the west will have its views blocked.
- Concerned that east facing windows of the existing apartment building to the west will be blocked, and residents will lose privacy and light.
- Supported the required 15' residential setbacks being maintained.
- Supported trees and greenscaping.
- Encouraged brick as a material.
- Stated that they do not want a 'playful' Pike/Pine corridor type design.
- Encouraged design to have a variety of windows.
- Supported allowing the ramp slope departure.
- Objects to the requested setback departures.
- Concerned that project is being designed around a hedge. Noted that the laurel hedge will need sun, asked how that will be provided.
- Noted that the north façade is important.
- Concerned about a blank wall along the north façade.
- Supported lobby location in preferred option.
- Encouraged small scale retail such as a restaurant with seating along E Mercer St.
- Stated that they liked the facade modulation of the building to west and encouraged the project to provide modulation.
- Stated that the project is not successfully transitioning to the lowrise zones.
- Stated that the project conceptual design is acceptable, and encourage massing similar to older apartment buildings.

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-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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board indicated the project should be designed to respect the neighborhood. The Board also noted that the project design was being limited by retaining the existing laurel hedge. (See Guideline E-1)

A-2 Streetscape Compatibility. The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Retain or increase the width of sidewalks.
- Provide street trees with tree grates or in planter strips, using appropriate species to provide summer shade, winter light, and year-round visual interest.
- Vehicle entrances to buildings should not dominate the streetscape.
- Orient townhouse structures to provide pedestrian entrances to the sidewalk.
- For buildings that span a block and “front” on two streets, each street frontage should receive individual and detailed site planning and architectural design treatments to complement the established streetscape character.
- New development in commercial zones should be sensitive to neighboring residential zones. Examples include lots on Broadway that extend to streets with residential character, such as Nagle Place or 10th or Harvard Avenues East. While a design with a commercial character is appropriate along Broadway, compatibility with residential character should be emphasized along the other streets.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting the Board encouraged the sidewalk along 15th Ave E to be patterned or scored and the corner at E Mercer St and 15th Ave E be activated.

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 did not discuss this guideline but indicated it was of highest importance.

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 spent much time discussing their concern with the requested departures from the upper level residential setbacks along the north and west lot lines. They indicated that the relationship of the proposed structure should better respect the existing residential structure to the west, especially as the existing structure has balconies. The Board also discussed the relationship to the structure to the north, indicating that the proposed design seemed to show more respect for this property than the structure to the west.

The Board indicated they were not inclined to support a residential setback departure along the west property line. The Board has concerns about the residential setback departure along the north lot line but may be inclined to grant the departure if the north façade is designed well (see Guidelines C-2 and D-2). They also encouraged the applicant to consider moving the ground level closer to the north property line.

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Incorporate quasi-public open space with new residential development or redevelopment, with special focus on corner landscape treatments and courtyard entries.
- Create substantial courtyard-style open space that is visually accessible to the public view.
- Set back development where appropriate to preserve a view corridor.
- Set back upper floors to provide solar access to the sidewalk and/or neighboring properties.
- Mature street trees have a high value to the neighborhood and departures from development standards that an arborist determines would impair the health of a mature tree are discouraged.
- Use landscape materials that are sustainable, requiring minimal irrigation or fertilizer.
- Use porous paving materials to minimize stormwater run-off

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board did not discuss this guideline but indicated it was of highest importance.

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.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

1. Incorporate residential entries and special landscaping into corner lots by setting the structure back from the property lines.
2. Provide for a prominent retail corner entry.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board indicated that the corner should be activated and encouraged an entry be located at this location.

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.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

3. **Break up building mass by incorporating different façade treatments to give the impression of multiple, small-scale buildings, in keeping with the established development pattern.**
4. **Consider existing views to downtown Seattle, the Space Needle, Elliott Bay and the Olympic Mountains, and incorporate site and building design features that may help to preserve those views from public rights-of-way.**
5. **Design new buildings to maximize the amount of sunshine on adjacent sidewalks throughout the year**

At The Early Design Guidance Meeting the Board strongly noted that the project design and massing should be respectful of the neighboring structures. Specifically the Board would like to see the project massing transition to the residential zones to the north and west.

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 stated that a ‘modern’ building design may not be appropriate for this location.

- 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.**

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- **Incorporate signage that is consistent with the existing or intended character of the building and the neighborhood.**
- **Solid canopies or fabric awnings over the sidewalk are preferred.**
- **Avoid using vinyl awnings that also serve as big, illuminated signs.**
- **Use materials and design that is compatible with the structures in the vicinity if those represent the desired neighborhood character.**

At The Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted this guideline as highest priority and encouraged the structure to be designed as a gateway and terminus to the neighborhood commercial uses to the south and residential to the north.

- 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.**

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Use wood shingles or board and batten siding on residential structures.
- Provide operable windows, especially on storefronts.
- Use materials that are consistent with the existing or intended neighborhood character, including brick, cast stone, architectural stone, terracotta details, and concrete that incorporates texture and color.
- Consider each building as a high-quality, long-term addition to the neighborhood; exterior design and materials should exhibit permanence and quality appropriate to the Capitol Hill neighborhood.
- The use of applied foam ornamentation and EIFS (Exterior Insulation & Finish System) is discouraged, especially on ground level locations.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board stated that durable, long-life materials should be used. A materials board was requested for the Recommendation Meeting.

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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board indicated they don't want the north façade treated as a blank wall and it should provide visual interest. The four story elevation should be considered a gateway into the commercial neighborhood and encouraged windows.

- 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.**
- Consolidate and screen dumpsters to preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board asked how garbage pickup would be handled. They stated their concern that solid waste receptacles should not clutter the sidewalks on pick-up days.

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Consider: pedestrian-scale lighting, but prevent light spillover onto adjacent properties; architectural lighting to complement the architecture of the structure; transparent

windows allowing views into and out of the structure—thus incorporating the “eyes on the street” design approach’

- Provide a clear distinction between pedestrian traffic areas and commercial traffic areas through the use of different paving materials or colors, landscaping, etc.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board was concerned that the space between the proposed structure and existing laurel hedge could create a safety issue if used by transients or other trespassers.

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 did not discuss this guideline but indicated it was of highest importance.

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 did not discuss this guideline but indicated it was of highest importance.

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 did not discuss this guideline but indicated it was of highest importance.

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 did not discuss this guideline but indicated it was of highest importance.

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 did not fully discuss this guideline but they did indicate they thought that retaining the existing laurel hedge along the north property line was limiting development options. They discussed trimming or removing the hedge and noted that the hedge will most probably not survive as long as the proposed structure.

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 did not fully discuss this guideline, but they did imply that landscaping along the street frontage should enhance the street experience.

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, five departures were requested for the preferred Option 3:

- 1. Setback requirements for lots abutting residential zones (SMC 23.47A.014.B.1):** The Code requires a 15' by 15' triangular area setback where a NC zoned lot abuts the intersection of a side and front lot line of a lot in a residential zone. The applicant is proposing a 7' setback from the north lot line.

The Board indicated that they may grant this departure depending on the responsiveness of further development of the design, including treatment of the north façade. (Guidelines A-5, B-1, C-2 and D-2)

- 2. Setback requirements for lots abutting residential zones (SMC 23.47A.014.B.3.a&b):** The Code requires structures along a rear or side lot line that abuts a residential zoned lot to be setback 15' for portions of the structure above 13' in height up to 40', and an additional 2' for every ten feet of height above 40'. The applicant proposes a 7' setback along the north lot line.

The Board indicated that they may grant this departure depending on the responsiveness of further development of the design, including treatment of the north façade. (Guidelines A-5, B-1, C-2 and D-2)

- 3. Setback requirements for lots abutting residential zones (SMC 23.47A.014.B1):** The Code requires a 15' by 15' triangular area setback where a NC zoned lot abuts the intersection of a side and front lot line of a lot in a residential zone. The applicant is proposing a 5' setback at the upper stories from the west lot line.

The Board indicated that they are concerned about this departure and are unlikely to support such a departure, due to the potential loss of privacy and light to the development to the west. (Guidelines A-5 and B-1)

- 4. Setback requirements for lots abutting residential zones (SMC 23.47A.014.B.3.a&b):** The Code requires structures along a rear or side lot line that abuts a residential zoned lot to be setback 15' for portions of the structure above 13' in height up to 40', and an addition 2' for every ten feet of height above 40'. The applicant proposes a 5' setback for the southern portion of the structure along the west lot line and a 10' setback for the northern portion of the structure along the west lot line.

The Board indicated that they are concerned about this departure and are unlikely to support such a departure, due to the potential loss of privacy and light to the development to the west. (Guidelines A-5 and B-1)

- 5. Driveways (SMC 23.54.030. D.3):** The Code requires that no portion of a driveway exceed a slope of 15%. The applicant is requesting a driveway with a maximum slope of 20%.

The Board is inclined to support this departure, provided that safe circulation can be shown. (Guideline D-7)

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 stated that the applicant should move forward with a design closer to the code compliant option.

1. At the Recommendation Meeting provide detailed sketches of the residential entry.
2. At the Recommendation Meeting provide a materials board showing all exterior materials and colors.
3. At the Recommendation Meeting provide detailed elevations showing how the north façade will be treated as a gateway/terminus for the neighborhood.