



# City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development  
D. M. Sugimura, Director



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3014484

Address: 8026 15th Ave NW

Applicant: Lukas Branham, Studio Meng Stazzara

Date of Meeting: Monday, February 25, 2013

Board Members Present: Mike DeLilla (Acting Chair)  
Ellen Cecil  
Jerry Coburn  
Davis Neiman

Board Members Absent: Ted Panton

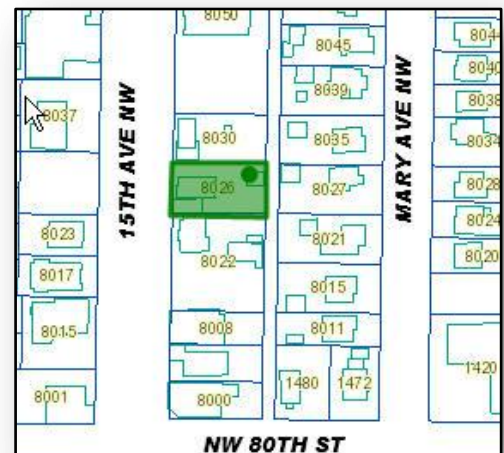
DPD Staff Present: Beth Hartwick, Senior Land Use Planner

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial 2-40 (NC2-40) Crown Hill Overlay

Nearby Zones: North: (NC2-40) & (NC3P-40)  
South: (NC2-40)  
East: Single Family 5000 (SF 5000)  
West: Single Family 5000 (SF 5000)

Lot Area: 6,780 square feet



Current Development: A single family residence, garage and a small one story commercial building. There is also a south facing bill board along the north property line.

Access: Alley access

Surrounding Development: To the south of the subject lot a 4 story apartment building is in the final stages of construction. Across the alley to the east are single story residences built in the first half of the 1900's. The lot directly to the north is owned by Seattle City Light and houses a substation which includes a small single story structure along 15th Ave NW. Across 15th Ave NW is a single story commercial building currently used as a restaurant.

ECAs: None

Neighborhood Character: 15th Ave NW is a busy arterial that connects the northwestern neighborhoods of Seattle to areas south of the Ship Canal and downtown. The street is under developed and consists of older single family residences either still occupied as such or converted to apartments or commercial space. Newer commercial buildings constructed in the second half of the 1900's are mostly single story with surface parking. The block directly to the north is developed with a grocery store, gas station and surface parking. The alley behind the subject lot is often used by customers of the store. The residential blocks off of 15th Ave NW are mostly one story single family residences built in the 1920-1940's.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is for a four-story mixed use apartment structure. The ground floor will have one live/work unit, a leasing office and parking for 14-15 vehicles accessed off the alley. The three stories above will have 24 apartment units. On the roof a common amenity area is to be provided. The structure will set back from the front lot line approximately 6' to allow for power line clearance and to align with the development to the south.

### EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: February 25, 2013

## DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Three alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options include one live/work unit and access of the alley.

The first scheme (Option 1) was a rectangle shaped code compliant structure, with no light wells.

The second scheme (Option 2) was a modified L-shaped structure with the building setting back from the property lines at the northeast corner.

The third scheme (Option 3) was the preferred scheme which is also code compliant. The rectangular structure will have light wells along the north and south lot lines. The street facing façade will be modulated.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

- Questioned what size are the residential units. [The applicant responded the units will be on average, 545 sq. ft.]
- Stated that they liked Option 2.
- Questioned the type of tenant that would use the live/work unit and the size of the unit. [The applicant responded the space will be approx. 800 sq ft.]
- Concerned with traffic going through the alley to the grocery store to the north and more traffic being generated by the development.

## **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 discussed the importance of providing continuity with the new development to the south. The proposed building should align with the adjacent development to the south.

#### **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 indicated that the roof deck should be pulled back from the east to allow privacy for the single family residences to the east.

- 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 indicated they need more information to understand the design of the six foot setback from the street facing lot line, specifically how this space is being treated.

- 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 discussed the impact of the access to parking from the alley. They stated they want more information about the relationship of the development to the existing garages of the nearby single family residences.

## **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 noted they want to see the modulation along 15<sup>th</sup> Ave NW developed and presented in more detail. The project should align with the development to the south along 15<sup>th</sup> Ave NW.

## **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 the project should relate to the development to the south, however the design should be a ‘brother’ with similarities but not be a ‘twin’.

- 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 indicated that the modulation along the 15<sup>th</sup> Ave NW façade should express the configuration of the units, or be broken into smaller sections. The project graphics should verify that the modulation is within the property and outside of the required power line setback.

- 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 indicated this guideline as a priority and wants to see a materials and color board at the Recommendation meeting.

## **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 indicated this guideline as a priority but did not discuss it further.

- 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 discussed at length the treatment of the north façade. They encouraged the applicant to consider flipping the light well configuration and have the larger light well at the north wall of the structure. This will allow for more windows and visual interest on the north façade.

The treatment of the north wall should be presented in detail at the Recommendation Meeting.

The Board encouraged the applicant to take advantage of the under developed lot to the north owned by Seattle City Light.

- D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures. The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape.**

**Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed at length the treatment of the fence or screening of the parking. They encouraged the applicant to set back the screening and provide landscaping. See Guidelines D-8, E-2.

**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 noted they would like to understand how trash would be collected, where it will be held and who will be responsible for making sure it is brought out to the alley on collection day. The Board noted the location should be shown on the site plan.

**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 noted they would like to see an exterior lighting plan at the Recommendation Meeting. Lighting in the garage should be presented.

**D-8 Treatment of Alleys. The design of alley entrances should enhance the pedestrian street front.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed their concern about the use of the alley and the screening of the proposed parking. The Board asked the applicant to consider reducing the amount of parking to allow more area for landscaping in front of the parking enclosure. Treatment of the alley should be designed to 'slow' traffic. See Guideline E-2.

## **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 agreed the landscaping along 15<sup>th</sup> Ave NW should work with and reinforce the landscaping of the development to the south.

**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 were concerned with the landscaping along the alley. Screening of the parking enclosure is a high priority. The Board suggested providing vertical trees along the screening. See Guideline D-8.

**DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, no departures were requested.

The Board recommended the applicant proceed with the development of the preferred Third Option. Key items that needs to be addressed are the size and locations of the light wells, the Board encouraged moving the larger light well to the north side of the structure, and the visual interest on the north wall.

The Board stated that for the Recommendation Meeting the applicant should provide:

- Site plan with all dimensions. Show the location of the windows of the building to the south. (Guideline A-5)
- Provide more context info. Show the context of the alley, the location of and photos of the existing structures. (Guideline A-5)
- Provide details of the fence and planting proposed for the alley (Guidelines D-8, E-1, E-2)
- Work out how the trash will be handled. (Guideline D-6)
- Show the location of the bike parking.
- Provide a layout of the live/work unit with dimensions.
- Provide details and sketches of the entry. (Guideline A-6)

**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.**