



City of Seattle

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



FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE NORTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3014484

Address: 8026 15th Ave NW

Applicant: Lukas Branham, Studio Meng Stazzara

Date of Meeting: Monday, July 22, 2013

Board Members Present: Ellen Cecil
Jerry Coburn
Mike DeLilla
Davis Neiman
Ted Panton - Chair

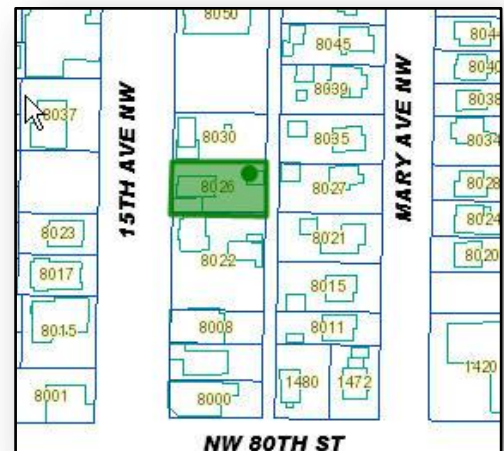
DPD Staff Present: Beth Hartwick, Senior Land Use Planner

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 is a recently built a4 story apartment building. 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 11 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.

The EDG packet includes materials presented at the EDG meeting, and is available online by entering the project number 3014339 at this website:

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

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.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION MEETING: July 22, 2013

At the EDG Meeting the Board had encouraged the applicant to move forward with the applicants preferred concept, Option C, 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.

At the upper levels of the street facing elevation a recessed bay will provide visual interest, but otherwise the elevations of the proposed project and the existing development to the south will be aligned, providing continuity. The project is aligning with the development to the south at the alley and interior light wells. At the front street elevation a setback, due to providing the required clearance from overhead power lines will provide landscaping similar to the adjacent development.

A one foot landscaping strip was added along the alley to screen the at grade parking. The code requires a planting strip and fence which the applicant asked a departure from. See Departures at the end of the report.

Building materials will include cast in place concrete at the base, fiber cement, tongue and groove cedar siding, vinyl residential windows, and metal Juliette balconies, street canopies and storefront system. The size of the light well at the north elevation has been increased in size and windows have been added.

The Recommendation packet includes materials presented at the Recommendation meeting, and is available online by entering the project number 3014481 at this website:

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Members of the public attended the Final Recommendation meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Concerned about height of project and departure at setback.
- Concerned alley will be busy with increased traffic from residential units.
- Supports the design and encouraged the use of cedar siding.

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.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting the Board appeared satisfied with how this guideline was addressed.

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.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting the Board appeared satisfied with how this guideline was addressed. The requested departure from residential setback requirements for portions of the structure above 40' high will not impact privacy. See Guidelines D-5, E-2.

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.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting the Board stated that the residential leasing office should be open during the day and have large storefront openings.

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.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting the Board stated their concern about how the alley was being treated. See Guidelines D-5, D-8.

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 15th Ave NW developed and presented in more detail. The project should align with the development to the south along 15th Ave NW.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting the Board appeared satisfied with how this guideline was addressed.

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’.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting the Board questioned why the east and west elevations of the project were different from the development to the south. The

applicant responded that the design was in response to the Boards guidance that the project be “a brother, not a twin” to the development to the south. The unit layouts are different, influencing the structural bay size and the exterior elevations.

- 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 15th 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.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting the Board questioned the compositional idea behind the east and west elevations. The applicant responded that the design was meant to read differently than the neighboring development, more as picture framing around the windows in two different colors, expressing the bay modulation.

- 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.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting the Board encouraged the use of cedar siding at the east and west elevations.

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.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting the Board appeared satisfied with how this guideline was addressed. See Guideline A-6.

- 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.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting the Board appeared satisfied with how this guideline was addressed. The light well along the north elevation has increased in size and windows have been added.

- 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.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting the Board indicated they were not pleased with the response to the guidance given at EDG. They were not inclined to grant a departure from a required 5' planting strip to screen the parking, and reiterated that tall vertical tress be provided in the planting strip. See Departures.

- 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.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting the Board questioned how the trash will be handled on collection days as it is located at the back of the parking area. The applicant responded that a service fee will be paid to have the trash containers moved. The Board appeared satisfied with this response.

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.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting the Board appeared satisfied with how this guideline was addressed. See Guideline A-6.

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.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting the Board indicated they were not pleased with the response to the guidance given at EDG. See Guidelines D-5, 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 15th Ave NW should work with and reinforce the landscaping of the development to the south.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting the Board appeared satisfied with how this guideline was addressed.

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.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting the Board indicated they were not pleased with the response to the guidance given at EDG. They were not inclined to grant a departure from a required 5' planting stripe to screen the parking, and reiterated that tall vertical trees be provided in the planting strip. See Departures.

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 four departures were requested:

1. **Street Level Uses (SMC 23.47A.005.C)** The Land Use Code requires that residential uses may occupy, in the aggregate, no more than 20 % of the street-level street-facing façade. The applicant is proposing residential uses to occupy 50% of the street facade. This is to provide for the residential entry and leasing office.

This departure would provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines A-2 and D-7 by providing the opportunity for large storefront openings that will be occupied by the leasing office and a more generous entry.

The Board 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.b)** The Land Use Code requires for a residential structure a setback, where it abuts or is across an alley from a residential zone. The setback is 15' for portions of the structure higher than 13' up to 40' in height with an additional setback at the rate of 2' for every 10' by which the height of such portion exceeds 40 feet. One half of the width of the alley may be counted as part of the required setback. The applicant is proposing not to further set back the portion of the structure above 40' which will be up to 45' and 47'-6" in height. This means a portion of the structure above 40', approximately 1'-6" in depth at the highest point, will be located within the required setback.

This departure would provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines C-2 by providing a unified building form.

The Board recommended that DPD grant the departure.

3. **Street Level Development Standards (SMC 23.47A.008.B.3.a)** The Land Use Code requires nonresidential uses shall extend an average depth of at least 30 feet and a minimum depth of 15 feet from the street-level street-facing facade. The applicant is proposing a live/work unit that has an average depth of 28'-4" which is 1'-8" less than the required 30'.

This departure would provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines by allowing for more room for the planting strip in the alley. This would meet the intent of guidelines A-8, D-5, and E-2.

The Board recommended that DPD grant the departure.

4. **Landscaping and Screening Standards (SMC 23.47A.016.D.1.c.2)** The Land Use Code requires surface parking abutting or across an alley from a lot in a residential zone must have 6-foot-high screening along the abutting lot line and a 5-foot-deep landscaped area inside the screening. The applicant proposed a 1' planting strip on the alley side of screening.

The Board was not inclined to grant the applicants requested departure. The Board did agree that the required 5' planting strip should face the alley and the 6' high screening should abut the enclosed parking. Landscaping in the planting strip should include tall vertical trees. This would meet the intent of guidelines A-8, D-5, and E-2.

The Board recommended that DPD grant the departure on the location of the 6' screening, subject to the conditions listed at the end of this report.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation summarized below was based on the design review packet dated July 22, 2013, and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the July 22, 2013 Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, three Design Review Board members (two members did not recommend approval) recommended APPROVAL of the subject design and departures, with the following conditions:

1. Tall vertical growing trees should be planted in the 5' planting strip facing the alley. (A-5, D-5, E-2)
2. Tongue and groove cedar siding should be used at the west and east elevations as shown in the color elevations. (C-2, C-4)
3. The leasing office should be kept open during the day and have a storefront appearance. (A-2, A-6 D-7)