



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3015183

Address: 1622 East Yesler Way

Applicant: Amanda Black, Caron Architecture

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, October 02, 2013

Board Members Present: Dawn Bushnaq (Chair)  
Christina Orr-Cahall  
Wolf Saar

Board Members Absent: Ric Cochrane  
Dan Foltz  
Natalie Gualy  
Michael Austin

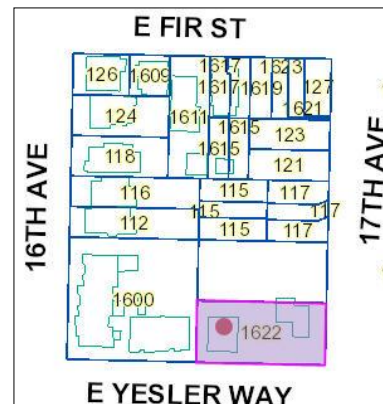
DPD Staff Present: Tami Garrett, Senior Land Use Planner

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial 1 (NC1-40)

Nearby Zones: North: Lowrise 3 (LR3)  
South: NC1-40  
East: NC1-40  
West: LR3

Lot Area: 8,024 square feet (sq. ft.)



Current Development: The project site contains two commercial structures: a former gas station and auto repair shop. There are three trees (Lombardy Poplars) that have been identified as Exceptional trees.

- Access:** Vehicular access to the project site is possible from both East Yesler Way and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- Surrounding Development:** Surrounding development includes a mix of townhouse units and apartment buildings east, west and north of the site. A two-story assisted living facility (Keiro Garden) is south of the subject property. The Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center/Theater (designated Landmark building) and associated surface parking area are located southeast and east of the project property respectively. A townhouse residential development is proposed under separate permit (#3015756) at the adjacent vacant lot to the north.
- ECAs:** The site's existing topography is characterized with grades descending gradually approximately 10' from northeast to southwest with paved areas adjacent to the existing structures. There are no Environmentally Critical Areas (ECAs) mapped on the site.
- Neighborhood Character:** The corner project site is located in the 23rd & Union-Jackson Urban Village District at the northwest intersection of East Yesler Way and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The general character of this block along 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the north and East Yesler Way to the south is predominantly residential in character. There is a mix of small-scale commercial businesses and residential developments (Bryant Manor) along East Yesler Way to the east. The neighborhood is in transition to becoming more pedestrian-oriented, and includes a King County Metro bus stop adjacent to the site on East Yesler Way. Pratt Park is two blocks east of the site.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed project is for the design and construction of one building consisting of a total of seven non-residential live-work units. Parking for nine vehicles is proposed to be provided within each live-work unit at grade and located at a surface parking area onsite. Access to the parking is proposed from 17th Avenue.

<b>EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: October 2, 2013</b>
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## **DESIGN PRESENTATION**

Three alternative design schemes were presented to the Board. The project team's development goals were to create a commercial building design that strengthens the corner; incorporates elements to clearly distinguish between the commercial ("work") space and the upper residential ("live") space; and relates to the surrounding neighborhood context. All three options presented included a four-story non-residential buildings equating to approximately seven live-work units with each unit having one parking stall within its unit. Vehicular access to

the enclosed seven parking enclosed parking stalls and two surface parking spaces was proposed to occur from 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The three massing options showed proposed entrances to the ground-related commercial (“work”) entrances oriented along East Yesler Way and secondary entrances leading to the upper residential (“live”) floors at the rear of the structure to the north. The alternative massing diagrams are distinguished by the alignment of the live-work units and orientation of the upper-levels.

The first and applicant preferred scheme (Option A) was a code-compliant massing option with recessed angled commercial entries below second floor balcony projections.

The second scheme (Option B) emphasized a more vertical modulation form inclusive of projected bay windows. The applicant explained this scheme would necessitate a code departure for structural building overhangs at the right-of-way.

The third scheme (Option C) emphasized a more horizontal modulation form by staggering each unit along East Yesler Way. This option was code compliant also.

The EDG packet includes materials presented at the EDG meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3015183) at this website:

[http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design\\_Review\\_Program/Project\\_Reviews/Reports/default.asp](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 3015183), 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](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

- Encouraged future design that would allow a singular proposed access drive to accommodate vehicular access for the project and the proposed residential development planned at the adjacent property to the north. Stated that on-street parking is limited in the neighborhood and explained that, in recent past, zone parking has been implemented. Concerned that multiple curb cuts accessing the project site and neighboring development would greatly minimize parking opportunities along 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue and increase traffic congestion in the immediate vicinity.

- Desired vehicular access to parking via East Yesler Way is explored if existing trees (Lombardy Poplars) are allowed to be removed from the project site.
- Concerned that future design in conjunction with the proposed development to the north will create a greater shadowing impact than presented.
- Voiced frustration that applicant’s materials did not illustrate proposed residential development at the adjacent property, north of the project site.
- Concerned that future commercial uses will not suitable with the existing neighborhood residential character and nearby uses (Keiro Garden).
- Requested clarification regarding the term “live-work” and inquired about the limitations associated with that type of use.

*[Staff Note: Per SMC 23.84A.024 “L”, “live-work unit” is defined as a structure or portion of a structure: (1) that combines a commercial or manufacturing activity that is allowed in the zone with a residential living space for the owner of the commercial or manufacturing business, or the owner's employee, and that person's household; (2) where the resident owner or employee of the business is responsible for the commercial or manufacturing activity performed; and (3) where the commercial or manufacturing activity conducted takes place subject to a valid business license associated with the premises.]*

- Encouraged future streetscape design along East Yesler Way to be more commercial in character.
- A representative of the Central Area Land Use Review Committee:
  - Thanked the design team for its presentation of the proposal in advance of the EDG meeting.
  - Expressed committee support of the proposal in general.
  - Very concerned about the small size of the “work” portion of the live-work units and its similarity in size to the existing live-work development two blocks east of the project site (@ 1818 East Yesler Way) which has small “work” spaces that been vacant for several years.
  - Advised that the success of the project from both the developer and neighbors’ point of view perhaps might be improved by bringing in some flexibility to enable, in the future, for those commercial spaces to be combined. Also suggested that removal of some of the enclosed parking spaces would assist in enlarging some of the “work” areas and, as a result, to make the commercial spaces more useful and attractive to future owners.

<b>PRIORITIES &amp; BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
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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 and Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE: October 2, 2013**

1. **Design Concept and Massing:** The design and siting pattern of the new live-work non-residential development should respond to specific site conditions, be oriented to the corner, exhibit form and features identifying the interior functions, be compatible with the anticipated scale of development, and complement the architectural character of neighboring residential buildings. (A-2, A-10, B-1, C-1, C-2)
  - a. The Board suggested the preferred design scheme Option 1 should move forward to Master Use Permit (MUP) submittal with the following guidance:
    - i. The Board agreed that Option 1 is a good concept and supported the basic direction of a two-part massing diagram with commercial at the street. However the Board voiced disappointment that the schemes offered for the Board’s review did not illustrated enough differentiation in massing and height. The Board felt that the massing presented worked against the applicant’s commercial design concept and did not relate well with the established neighborhood architectural context (Langston Hughes, adjacent residential uses and commercial buildings). It is imperative that the Board understands more clearly how the design is cohesive as building form and relates to the established context. At the Recommendation meeting, the Board expects to review a design that: incorporates design cues from the neighboring commercial developments which seem to be more rectilinear in character; creates a strong commercial presence at the corner that should not be treated as a side of a building; allows for flexibility in the commercial (“work”) spaces; and, if there are changes in scale, it makes sense.
  - b. At the Recommendation meeting, the Board expects to review in both plan and elevation views the proposal, existing residential property to the west and the new residential proposal to the north. The applicant should also provide similar information to demonstrate how the adjacent facades and proposed fenestration lines up with existing/proposed residential unit windows to the west and to the north of the subject site. (C-1, C-2)
  - c. The Board recognized that the configuration and size of “work” area of the live-work units adds to the viability of the development. The Board stated that they would support a design that would reduce onsite parking by eliminating some of the enclosed parking (preferably from the corner volume) to create larger enhanced “work” spaces. The Board expects to review a design that incorporates this concept and would consider a smaller scale of “work” space as the units move to the west. (A-2, A-5, C-1, C-2)
2. **Vehicular Parking and Access:** The design of the vehicular access and parking should be sited appropriately and well screened. (A-8, D-4, D-5)
  - a. The Board acknowledged that the siting of vehicular access via 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue versus East Yesler Way was appropriate due to the bus stop/zone abutting the property at East Yesler Way.
  - b. The Board stated the proposal should mitigate parking both visually and spatially. Also, the Board felt that there was an opportunity to treat the driveway as a

forecourt to assist in creating a more residential environment enhanced with screening and landscaping.

- i. The Board commented that it would support a future code departure request that would reduce the two-way curb cut width requirement (22' to 25') to a narrower curb cut width that is appropriate, can accommodate vehicular access in a safe manner and meets the intent of this design guidance. (A-5, A-7, A-8, D-4)
    - ii. The Board commented that it was also in support of a future code departure request for deviations from parking aisle widths. The applicant must demonstrate that it meets the intent of the design guidance to create a “park-like experience at the back” and demonstrate that vehicular backing and maneuvering can be safely executed on the site. (A-5, A-7, A-8, D-4)
  - c. The applicant explained that onsite parking is not required for this non-residential proposal. The Board liked that the proposal included onsite parking and encouraged the applicant to continue to include onsite parking as the project evolves in design. (A-8)
  - d. The Board stated that, in order to complete the composition, the live-work parking spaces in the structure should have garage doors and the open parking spaces should be screened from the street and adjacent properties. (D-5)
3. **Streetscape Continuity and Pedestrian Environment:** The design of the new building should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to enhance pedestrian comfort, discourage blank walls, are respectful of adjacent properties and reinforce the spatial characteristics of both East Yesler Way and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue. (A-2, A-4, A-5, A-10, C-3, C-4, D-2, D-6, D-9, D-10, D-11, E-1, E-2)
  - a. The Board felt it was important that the design reinforces desired streetscape characteristics which is commercial at the street-level and incorporates elements that achieve good human scale. At the Recommendation meeting, the Board expects to review renderings showing how the live-work building, 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, etc.) that would be visible by pedestrians from the sidewalk should also be offered. (A-1, A-2, A-6, D-1, D-2, E-2)
  - b. The Board acknowledged that all visible blank walls (east and west facades) will need to be addressed. The Board expects to review details pertaining to any landscaping and/or design treatments proposed to address this concern at the Recommendation phase. (D-2, E-2)
  - c. The Board encouraged the use of durable quality materials (specifically commercial materials) that reinforce the design concept and respond to the permanence of the Langston Hughes building. The Board expects to review physical materials and color hues in keeping with the neighborhood context at the Recommendation meeting. (A-10, C-4)
  - d. At the recommendation meeting, the Board expects to review details/feedback from Seattle Public Utilities (SPU)-Solid Wasted division and trash collector concerning waste/recycling collection program and screening. (D-6, E-2)

- e. Conceptual commercial lighting and signage designs proposed for the building's façades should be presented at the Recommendation meeting. (D-9, D-10)
4. **Exceptional Trees:**
- a. A special site condition is the presence of three Exceptional Trees, (34.8", 54.5" and 53" Lombardy Poplars) all located along the site's westernmost property line. The applicant proposal includes the removal of these trees. Prior to the EDG meeting, the Board was briefed by DPD staff to expect to weigh-in on an additional design concept that would include the retention of the abovementioned trees and receive supplementary materials regarding the trees. At the EDG meeting, the Board inquired about the status of the Exceptional Tree concern, as well as, the exclusion of promised supplementary materials/design concept. DPD staff explained that the applicant had submitted an additional arborist report (prepared by Ryan Ringe, dated September 27, 2013) just prior to the meeting indicating that the three trees should be deemed hazard based on his risk assessment. It was realized, after preliminary review of the latest arborist report by the DPD Tree Expert that the identified trees may be deemed hazard but further review of additional requested material from the arborist was necessary. The Board confirmed the location of the identified trees and determined that the trees of concern would not affect their deliberations at the EDG phase; however, the Board's expectation is that applicant will provide feedback from DPD concerning the Exceptional trees status determination at the next meeting. (E-3)
5. **Landscaping:** The future landscape design should reinforce design continuity with adjacent sites and enhance the project. (E-1, E-2)
- a. The Board noted that future landscaping within the right-of-ways should relate to the commercial (structured, plantings, hardscape) character along East Yesler Way and around corner on 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue, transition to a residential character when appropriate along 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue, acknowledge the bus zone and be designed. The Board reviewed and commented on the landscaping images presented (pg. 20 in the design packet) and stated that they were supportive in the direction of the images shown. 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 additional design feedback. Therefore, the Board requested the applicant to address this requirement directly with SDOT during the initial MUP review process and provide street improvement landscaping design specifics at the Recommendation meeting. (A-1, A-2, E-1)
  - b. The Board noted that pedestrians and surrounding residential properties will have direct views to the drive aisle/parking area. The Board felt that the suggested forecourt should be designed residential in character, appropriate for vehicular maneuvering/access and be well landscaped. The Board expects to review access (paths, drive aisle) and landscaping elements pertaining to this space, as well as, at the site's edges, at the Recommendation meeting. (A-5, A-7, D-7, E-2)

## **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.
- A-4 Human Activity.** New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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-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.
- 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-3 Human Scale.** The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements, and details to achieve a good human scale.
- 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-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-4 **Design of Parking Lots Near Sidewalks.** Parking lots near sidewalks should provide adequate security and lighting, avoid encroachment of vehicles onto the sidewalk, and minimize the visual clutter of parking lot signs and equipment.
- 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.
- 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.
- D-7 **Personal Safety and Security.** Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

## 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.

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
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**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.**