



# City of Seattle

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



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3015604

Address: 5260 University Way NE

Applicant: Lora Hammersmith of Studio 19 Architects

Date of Meeting: Monday, December 09, 2013

Board Members Present: Joe Hurley(Chair)  
Ivana Begley  
Salone Habibudden  
Christina Pizana  
Martine Zettle

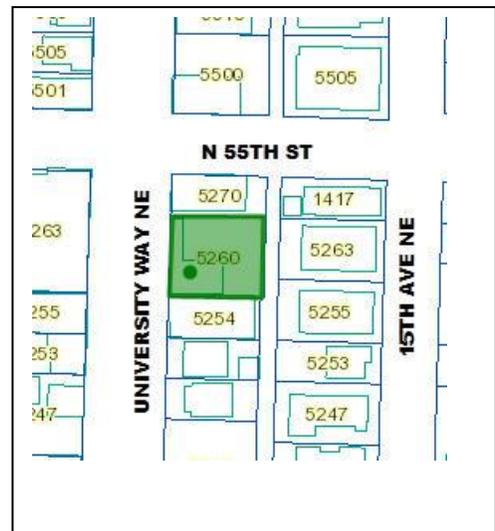
DPD Staff Present: Shelley Bolser

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial (NC3-65)

Nearby Zones: (North) NC3P-65  
(South) NC3P-65  
(East) LR3, across the alley  
(West) NC3P-65

Lot Area: 7,440 square feet



Current Development: A two-story early 20th century mixed-use building with surface parking at the alley.

Access: Existing vehicular access is via the alley.

Nearby development includes a variety of heights and ages of mixed-use residential and commercial buildings along University Way NE, with 20th century multi-family residential buildings across the alley.

The University of Washington campus is located a few blocks to the southeast. The future light rail station (to open in approximately 2020) is located about 10 blocks to the south, near NE 45th St. University Way ("The Ave") borders the west side of this site.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character: The site is located in the University Urban Center. Urban Centers are intended to be neighborhoods with higher density development, taller structures, and a variety of commercial uses and services near transit. The University Urban Center exhibits many of these characteristics, although some of the parcels are underdeveloped when compared to the zoned heights and intensity of uses. Most of the commercial uses and services are located on the main arterial streets.

The nearby neighborhood is fully developed with sidewalks, but often lacks planting strips and street trees. Transit service is frequent and includes a variety of routes. The future light rail station will further increase the frequency and choice of modes of transit. The nearby streets are heavily used by pedestrians, cyclists, transit, and other vehicles

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a 7-story structure with 68 residential units and 3,814 sq. ft. of retail at ground level. No parking is proposed. The existing structure is proposed to be demolished.

### EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: December 9, 2013

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3015604) 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 packet is also available to view in the file, 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)

The applicant explained that the “lantern” concept at the alley would be a semi-enclosed or fenced area that would be lit for visual effect, but would not be accessible by residents or the public. This area is the result of maximizing the Floor Area Ratio at the upper levels of the building.

The proposed architectural concept is based on images shown in the packet, using regular bays with large areas of glazing and quality materials. The applicant noted that the material palette may not reach the level of the images shown in the packet, but the intent is to achieve a comparable design expression and create an infill building with simple strong forms. A green roof is proposed.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- The street level should be designed with visual interest to maximize pedestrian activity and draw people north along University Way NE.
- The upper level façade should include Juliet balconies or some treatment to reduce the scale and provide visual interest.
- The site should be designed for safety at the alley. The proposed covered area at grade on the alley facade is questionable, since it won’t include active uses and therefore might encourage graffiti and other negative behavior.
- Support for the proposed development at this site.

## **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.

### **EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE (December 9, 2013):**

1. **Massing and Architectural Concept.** The Board noted that Massing Option C is the preferred scheme, but directed the applicant to incorporate certain aspects of Massing Option A.
  - a. The Board noted that Massing Option A offers a continuous retail storefront, creates a better urban infill response, offers more usable building area and open space, and provides a massing transition to the lower zone across the alley.

- b. The Board supported the proposed design concept of simple strong architectural forms, quality materials, and large glazed areas.
- 2. Street Level Design.** The street level should be designed for maximum transparency, continuous retail storefront, and a welcoming residential entry.
- a. The retail street frontage should be continuous in order to allow more flexible division of retail spaces over time. (A-4, C-2)
  - b. The retail street frontage should be designed for visual interest, maximum transparency, and maximum retail viability. (C-2, C-4, D-1, D-9, D-10, D-11)
  - c. The Board recommended that the residential entry should be located at either the north or south end of the street frontage. The off-set entry offers an opportunity for modulation at the upper levels. The entry should be designed to be sufficiently sized and welcoming to residents. (A-3, A-6, B-1, C-2, C-4)
  - d. The Board supported removing the stairs at the north and south property lines, since they appear to serve little function for pedestrians and they pose safety challenges. (A-4, A-5, D-7)
  - e. The north wall should be designed to provide visual interest and maximize light and air for residents to the north. The Board noted that the property line to property line massing is appropriate for the urban infill context and likely future development. The proposed development should also include strategies to provide the adjacent residents with a visually interesting façade and maintain natural light where possible, perhaps using some modulation or varying the north roof line. (A-5, C-2, C-3, C-4)
- 3. Alley.** The alley should be designed to provide usable secure spaces for residents, provide a massing transition to the lower adjacent zoning, and maximize landscape opportunities.
- a. The Board questioned the proposed “lantern” concept at grade at the alley. The enclosed area would be unusable and could attract unsafe behavior and graffiti. The Board recommended that the alley façade should instead reflect Massing Option A or a similar plan that provides usable building area and outside space. (B-1, D-1, D-7)
  - b. The Board noted that Massing Option A also has the opportunity for landscaping in the soil rather than on a structure, making it possible to plant larger trees and more mature landscaping. The proposed development should be designed to achieve this goal. (E-2)
  - c. Massing Option A erodes the eastern portion of the building, which provides a better transition to the lower zoning height across the alley. The proposed design should include this or a similar strategy. (B-1)
  - d. The alley open spaces should be designed for safety, including lighting and eyes on the ‘street’ or alley in this case. (D-7)
  - e. The design of services (laundry, bike storage, mail, etc.) and utility screening (gas meters, solid waste, etc.) will be especially important at this site, given the lack of a garage and the design of the alley as residential space. (D-6)

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-3 Entrances Visible from the Street. Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.**

**University-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Context:** Another way to emphasize human activity and pedestrian orientation, particularly along Mixed Use Corridors, is to provide clearly identifiable storefront entries. In residential projects, walkways and entries promote visual access and security.

**Guidelines:**

1. On Mixed Use Corridors, primary business and residential entrances should be oriented to the commercial street.
2. In residential projects, except townhouses, it is generally preferable to have one walkway from the street that can serve several building entrances.
3. When a courtyard is proposed for a residential project, the courtyard should have at least one entry from the street.
4. In residential projects, front yard fences over four (4) feet in height that reduce visual access and security should be avoided.

**A-4 Human Activity. New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.**

**University-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Context:** Pedestrian orientation and activity should be emphasized in the University Community, particularly along Mixed Use Corridors. While most streets feature narrow sidewalks relative to the volume of pedestrian traffic, wider sidewalks and more small open spaces for sitting, street musicians, bus waiting, and other activities would benefit these areas. Pedestrian-oriented open spaces, such as wider sidewalks and plazas, are encouraged as long as the setback does not detract from the “street wall.”

**Guidelines:** On Mixed Use Corridors, where narrow sidewalks exist (less than 15' wide), consider recessing entries to provide small open spaces for sitting, street musicians, bus waiting, or other pedestrian activities. Recessed entries should promote pedestrian movement and avoid blind corners.

**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.**

**University-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Context:** This Citywide Design Guideline is particularly important where a building's back side, service areas or parking lots could impact adjacent residential uses. Map 2 (page 8) shows potential impact areas—these are where Lowrise zones abut commercial zones.

**Guideline:** Special attention should be paid to projects in the zone edge areas as depicted in Map 2 to ensure impacts to Lowrise zones are minimized as described in A-5 of the Citywide Design Guidelines.

- 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.
- 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.

**University-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Context:** The residential areas are experiencing a change from houses to block-like apartments. Also, the proximity of lower intensive zones to higher intensive zones requires special attention to potential impacts of increased height, bulk and scale. These potential impact areas are shown in Map 4 . The design and siting of buildings is critical to maintaining stability and Lowrise character.

**Guideline:** Special attention should be paid to projects in the following areas to minimize impacts of increased height, bulk and scale as stated in the Citywide Design Guideline.

- 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.

**University-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Guidelines:**

1. New buildings should emphasize durable, attractive, and well-detailed finish materials, including: Brick; Concrete; Cast stone, natural stone, tile; Stucco and stucco-like panels; Art tile; Wood.
2. Sculptural cast stone and decorative tile are particularly appropriate because they relate to campus architecture and Art Deco buildings. Wood and cast stone are appropriate for moldings and trim.
3. The materials listed below are discouraged and should only be used if they complement the building's architectural character and are architecturally treated for a specific reason that supports the building and streetscape character: Masonry units; Metal siding; Wood siding and shingles; Vinyl siding; Sprayed-on finish; Mirrored glass.
4. Where anodized metal is used for window and door trim, then care should be given to the proportion and breakup of glazing to reinforce the building concept and proportions.
5. Fencing adjacent to the sidewalk should be sited and designed in an attractive and pedestrian oriented manner.
6. Awnings made of translucent material may be backlit, but should not overpower neighboring light schemes. Lights, which direct light downward, mounted from the awning frame are acceptable. Lights that shine from the exterior down on the awning are acceptable.
7. Light standards should be compatible with other site design and building elements.

#### Signs

**Context:** The Citywide Design Guidelines do not provide guidance for new signs. New guidelines encourage signs that reinforce the character of the building and the neighborhood.

#### Guidelines:

1. The following sign types are encouraged, particularly along Mixed Use Corridors – Pedestrian oriented shingle or blade signs extending from the building front just above pedestrians; Marquee signs and signs on pedestrian canopies; Neon signs; Carefully executed window signs; such as etched glass or hand painted signs; Small signs on awnings or canopies.
2. Post mounted signs are discouraged.
3. The location and installation of signage should be integrated with the building's architecture.
4. Monument signs should be integrated into the development, such as on a screen wall.

- 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.

**University-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Context:** The University Community would like to encourage, especially on Mixed Use Corridors, the provision of usable, small open spaces, such as gardens, courtyards, or plazas that are visible and/or accessible to the public. Therefore, providing ground-level open space is an important public objective and will improve the quality of both the pedestrian and residential environment.

**Guidelines:**

1. On Mixed Use Corridors, consider setting back a portion of the building to provide small pedestrian open spaces with seating amenities. The building façades along the open space must still be pedestrian-oriented.
  2. On Mixed Use Corridors, entries to upper floor residential uses should be accessed from, but not dominate, the street frontage. On corner locations, the main residential entry should be on the side street with a small courtyard that provides a transition between the entry and the street.
- 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-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**

No departures were identified at the time of the EDG meeting.

## **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.**