



# City of Seattle

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



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3015955

Address: 5601 20<sup>th</sup> Ave NW

Applicant: Heather Johnston with Place Architects for Inhaus Development

Date of Meeting: Monday, September 30, 2013

Board Members Present: Ted Panton (Chair)  
Ellen Cecil  
Jerry Coburn  
Mike DeLilla  
David Neiman

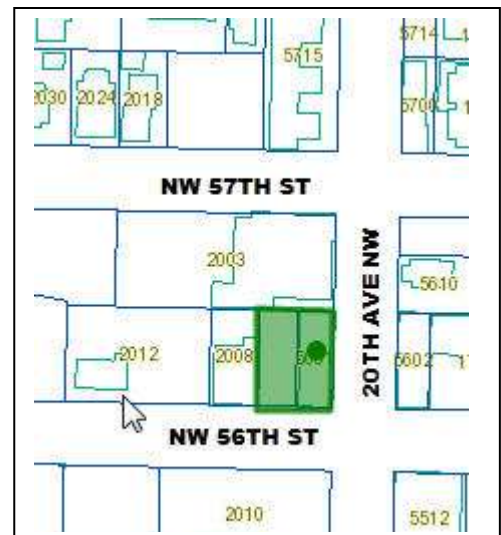
DPD Staff Present: Shelley Bolser, Senior Land Use Planner

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: NC3-65

Nearby Zones: (North) NC3-65  
(South) NC3-65, with NC3-85 to the southeast  
(East) NC3-65  
(West) NC3-65

Lot Area: 7,800 square feet



Current  
Development:

This site is located in central Ballard. The subject property is located on the northwest corner of 20th Ave NW and NW 56th St on the same block as the Ballard Library and the recently completed Greenfire site. The site slopes gradually from the north down to the south. The existing structure is an early 20th century 1-story commercial building. There is no alley adjacent to the site.

Nearby development includes a variety of structures. Newer development tends to be 6-8 stories tall. Older buildings include 1-2 story commercial and residential structures, mostly constructed in the early to mid-20th century. Mixed-use residential and retail buildings are concentrated to the south and west, with a few to the north and east. Some nearby sites are also proposed for residential or mixed-use development.

Surrounding  
Development  
and  
Neighborhood  
Character:

The site is located north of NW Market Street, within the area designated under the Ballard Municipal Center Master Plan. NW Market Street includes a dense concentration of retail and restaurant uses, with additional commercial uses to the south. Historic downtown Ballard is located to the southwest, across NW Market St.

NW 56th St includes commercial uses, but at a lower density than Market Street and areas to the south. The areas to the north transition quickly to multi-family and single family residential development.

Nearby recreational opportunities include Ballard Commons Park one block to the west, Ballard Pool a few blocks to the northeast, and Ballard Locks approximately 12 blocks to the southwest. Bus and bus rapid transit are located near the site at NW Market St, 15th Ave NW, and 24th Ave NW.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The preferred option for this development includes a 6-story building with approximately 33 residential units, 6 live-work spaces (4,400 square feet total), 18 parking stalls accessed from a curb cut on NW 56th St, and storage for 39 bicycles.

<b>EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: September 30, 2013</b>
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The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3015955) 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 noted that the proposed program includes smaller live-work spaces that are intended to provide opportunities for creative small businesses. The intent of the development program is to encourage creative collaboration between residents and tenants of the building.

The applicant described a design parti of salt crystals surrounded by a solid mass. The “salt crystals” would be represented by a glazed corner element with operable window walls, similar to the images shown on new EDG packet sheet 5.1.1. The solid mass would be composed of more opaque durable materials. The party walls at the north and west property lines would be treated with various solid materials and the intent of providing visual interest. The north wall would be designed as a backdrop for the adjacent building (currently a funeral home).

All the schemes showed the building massing pushed to the north and east, to allow increased light and air to the proposed residential units. The schemes with parking showed a shared vehicular and pedestrian entry. The applicant explained that the intent is to design this area as a woonerf. The driveway would have a different slope than the adjacent walkway, and would be separated from the walkway by a handrail or planters.

The applicant provided new EDG packet sheets with a fourth option, showing additional articulation based on the same massing as the first three options. The applicant clarified that the proposed development is anticipated to be condos rather than apartments.

The applicant explained that the massing options are fairly similar, reflecting the firm’s determination that other massing options had too many problems, such as lack of light and air for interior units. The applicant also noted that the driveway access location is based on the direction of the Ballard Municipal Center Master Plan (to place driveway access on Streets rather than on Avenues).

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following comments, issues and concerns were raised during public comment:

- Displeased with new development across the City in general.
- Attorney representing Greenfire development spoke in support of the high quality design concept, and offered comment on the proposal:
  - Option D appears to be a positive design direction, but the proposed design should be based on creative massing.
  - Common outdoor amenity areas are important in Ballard, so there needs to be a usable amount of common outdoor amenities as well as private deck areas.

- The garage access off 56<sup>th</sup> needs to be carefully treated, especially if it's combined with residential entry.
- The proposed development should include an analysis of shadow impacts to nearby properties. Greenfire has a solar array and wants to continue to have it be functional, in coordination with new infill development.
- Greenfire found that a parking utilization study was helpful in determining the amount of parking that should be included with their development. The applicant should also provide an on-street parking utilization study for their own benefit and sizing needs.

<p><b>PRIORITIES &amp; BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS</b></p>
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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.

**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE:**

1. **Massing Options: The EDG packet effectively included one massing option, with articulation and provision of parking as the only differences between Options A, B, C, and D. The Board noted that they need to see analysis of different massing alternatives in response to the specific site, streetscape, and nearby context before adequate guidance can be provided.**
  - a. The Board noted that the site is located on a corner lot and offers opportunities for more massing alternatives than the ones shown in the packet. (A-1, A-10, B-1)
  - b. The Board clarified that possible massing alternatives should explore the placement of the building mass and open spaces on site. (B-1)
  - c. The applicant should demonstrate how the proposed open space program relates to the building program for each massing option. (A-7)
  - d. The Board noted that the existing power lines may result in an upper level setback at the southeast corner, which would affect the massing options. The applicant should continue working with Seattle City Light and provide updated massing options in response to any requirements. (A-1, B-1)
  
2. **Blank Walls: The Board expressed concern that the massing alternative shown at the EDG meeting presented a large amount of potential blank wall area due to the extensive wall area at the shared property lines.**
  - a. The Board would like to see massing options that provide more opportunity for glazing and modulation at the shared property lines. (A-5, B-1, D-2)
  - b. The Board noted that the appearance of the north and west walls will be visible above the adjacent development. The applicant should demonstrate how the design of these walls will relate to the adjacent development, and the appearance of these walls from the northwest and northeast. (B-1, D-2)

3. **Entries and Ground Floor:** The Board expressed concern that the ground floor of the building in each massing option indicates potentially difficult building entries, and may lack sufficient area to accommodate the mailbox and solid waste needs.
  - a. The deep entry point, the long narrow walkways to the pedestrian entry, and the shared vehicular/pedestrian entry appears to conflict with the Design Review Guidelines. (A-3, A-8, C-5, D-1)
  - b. The applicant should explore other pedestrian entry options, possibly locating the entry and lobby at the corner, and separating the pedestrian entry from the vehicular entry. The Board suggested looking at nearby older residential buildings for corner entry design context. (A-3, D-1)
  - c. The applicant should demonstrate how the ground floor will be designed to respond to lobby needs (mailboxes, etc.) and solid waste collection. The Board expressed concern about the applicant’s intent to provide solid waste collection through the lobby corridor to the east street frontage. (A-3, D-6)
  
4. **Landscape and Materials:** Board was supportive of conceptual landscape response to adjacent nearby conditions and the conceptual material palette response. (E-1)

**DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES**

The Neighborhood specific guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

- 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.**

**Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Development Surrounding the Park**

- **West, North and East sides of the park:** Buildings are encouraged to create a consistent two-story street wall with ground related entries. Development above the base should be set back and/or modulated to increase solar exposure to the street and other public places.
- **South side of the park:** Cultural and civic uses are planned in this area. However, if mixed use development occurs, a consistent street wall with a two story minimum base is encouraged. Development should be set back above the two story height and/or modulated in a manner that enhances solar exposure to the park.

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

**Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Development Surrounding the Park**

- **West side:** Access to the front doors of townhouse residences should be provided via a paved and well lit pedestrian connection. The non-residential development west of the park should provide at least two separate retail entrances on 24th Avenue NW. Residential access (both vehicular and pedestrian) is most appropriate on NW 58<sup>th</sup> Street.
- **Streets:** The mid block pedestrian connection should foster social contact in a safe environment. New development is highly encouraged to front retail and/or townhouse style units on the mid block connection at street level. To further promote vitality and safety in the pedestrian experience, entries to retail and townhouse units should be placed in an identifiable and engaging manner.

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

**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.

**Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:**

In Neighborhood Commercial (NC) zones, vehicular entrances are discouraged on the avenues. When absolutely necessary, they should be limited to right turn ingress and egress only. Vehicular access to sites is most appropriate along NW 56th, 57th, and 58<sup>th</sup> Streets. Commercial vehicular access is most appropriate on NW 56th and/or NW 57th Streets. New at-grade parking areas should minimize exposure to the street edge. At-grade parking areas and driveways are discouraged directly adjacent to the park. Where curbcuts are provided, the number and width should be minimized.

**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-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.

**Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Development Surrounding the Park**

- **West, North and East sides of the park:** In general, the overall development massing should maximize the solar access to the park through careful massing arrangement of the upper levels, set back above a two-story base containing townhouse style units.
- **South side of the park:** Civic and cultural uses are anticipated to be developed along the south edge of the park. However if mixed use development does occur, it should

provide a consistent street wall with a two-story minimum height. Development should be set back above the two story height and/or modulate the facade to enhance solar exposure to the park.

- **Mixed Use Development on North-Side Avenues:** Buildings should maintain a consistent street wall up to a minimum of two stories and provide a setback(s), particularly on the west side of the avenue, beyond three stories to enhance solar access to the street and avoid a ‘canyon’ effect.
- **Mixed Use and Residential Development on East-West Streets:** Same as above, except with setbacks particularly on the south side of the street beyond three stories to enhance solar access to the street. Buildings should provide façade modulations that break down the scale of larger developments to recall the underlying original 50’ parcel widths.

**C-5 Structured Parking Entrances.** The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.

**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.

**Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:**

- **Guidelines:** New development is encouraged to contribute to a mid-block, north-south connection system for pedestrians. Active, pedestrian-oriented commercial design and/or ground related town house units are encouraged to extend from the street facing facade and front the pedestrian connection path, thereby contributing visual interest and more opportunity for social contact.
- **Mixed Use Development:** Continuous overhead weather protecting canopies are encouraged on buildings adjacent to the sidewalk. Transparent or translucent canopies along the length of the street provide welcome weather protection, define the pedestrian realm, and reduce the scale of taller buildings.

**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.

**Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:**

Active, open, interesting building facades are strongly encouraged, particularly on sites adjacent to the park.

**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.

**Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Service areas, loading docks and refuse should be internal to the development or carefully screened, especially on sites directly adjacent to the park.**

- 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.**

**DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

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

**BOARD DIRECTION**

**At the conclusion of the EDG meeting, the Board recommended the project should return to the Board for an additional EDG meeting.**