



# City of Seattle

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



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3016051

Address: 3300 Northeast 65<sup>th</sup> Street

Applicant: Marcy Shaw

Date of Meeting: Monday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Board Members Present: Ivana Begley  
Joe Hurley  
Christina Pizana  
Martine Zettle

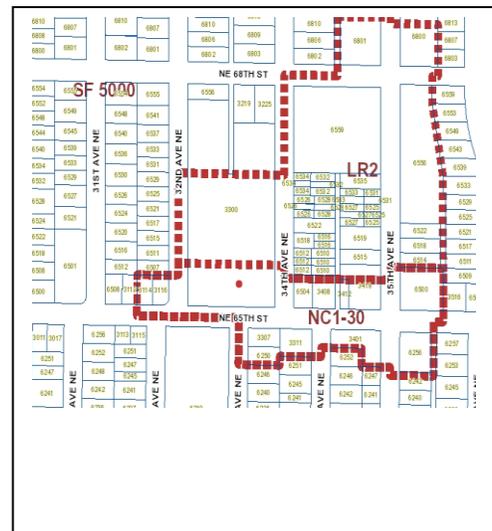
Board Members Absent: Salone Habibuddin

DPD Staff Present: Bruce P. Rips

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial One with a 30' height limit (NC1 30).

Nearby Zones: NC1 30 zoning extends along NE 65<sup>th</sup> St from just east of 35<sup>th</sup> Ave NE to west of 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave NE. The multifamily Lowrise Two (LR2) lies to the north and to the northeast of the subject site encompassing a corridor along 35<sup>th</sup> Ave NE. Single Family 5000 (SF5000), the predominant zoning classification in the vicinity, surrounds the small node of NC1 30 and LR2 zoning.



Lot Description: The NC1 30 portion of the property represents 22 percent of the 142,267 square foot lot or 31,930 sq. ft. of the 3.34 acre lot. The south quarter of the site ascends approximately ten feet from the southeast corner to the northwest corner.

Current Development: Children’s Home Society complex. One building and a parking lot occupy the southern portion of the block. Mature trees border the three surrounding rights of way and grow on islands in the parking lot.

Access: NE 65<sup>th</sup> St., 32<sup>nd</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> Avenues NE

Surrounding Development & Neighborhood Character: The project site lies within the Bryant/Ravenna neighborhood in Seattle’s northeast quadrant. The neighborhood possesses a mix of mostly single family homes, a small amount of townhouses between 34<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> Ave NE and a mix of institutional and small scale commercial uses facing NE 65<sup>th</sup> St. and 35<sup>th</sup> Ave NE. The homes in the area represent common architectural styles built throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The nearby institutional buildings, including the NE Branch Library, Assumption – St. Bridget School and Church, the Theodora Apartments, Wedgwood Unitarian Church and Beth Shalom Congregation, were for the most part constructed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century embodying a Pacific Northwest approach to modernist architecture. NE 65<sup>th</sup> St. and 35<sup>th</sup> Ave NE, significant arterials, connect Magnuson Park to Green Lake in the east west direction and University Village/University Washington to the Lake City neighborhood.

ECAs: No mapped environmental critical area.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicant proposes to build a three-story mixed use structure with 28 residential dwelling units, eight live/work units and 6,500 square feet of commercial space. Enclosed parking for 70 vehicles to be located below grade. The existing building would be demolished.

**DESIGN DEVELOPMENT**

The applicant produced three schematic ideas for the southern quarter of the block bounded by NE 65<sup>th</sup> St. on the south, 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave NE on the west, 34<sup>th</sup> Ave NE on the east and NE 68<sup>th</sup> St on the north. Scheme A, a large undifferentiated block with the exception of a small step in height near the mid-point of NE 65<sup>th</sup> St., illustrates vehicle access from 34<sup>th</sup> Ave NE, a below grade garage, live/work units and commercial space fronting NE 65<sup>th</sup> St. and apartment units above and behind

the two types of commercial units. The floor plan indicates a double loaded corridor along the east/west axis.

The massing of Scheme B presents a tripartite scheme along NE 65<sup>th</sup> St. with commercial spaces at the corners and a recessed court between the street and live/work units. The central portion of the mass steps up in height toward the north. Parking access, similar to the other two schemes, occurs on 34<sup>th</sup> Ave NE. Scheme C maintains the same programming with commercial spaces at the corner, the live/work units located in the central portion of the frontage, and residential units behind and above the commercial. The massing, relatively undifferentiated along NE 65<sup>th</sup> St. with the exception of a narrow reveal for pedestrian entry into the residential realm, splits along the east/west axis above the ground floor to reveal a linear court for small patios and to introduce greater amounts of light into the units. The plans appear to accommodate roof top decks and patios along the north and south elevations.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Approximately 33 members of the public affixed their names to the Early Design Guidance meeting sign-in sheet. Speakers raised the following issues:

### Massing

- Supports the idea of reducing the building mass into three parts along NE 65<sup>th</sup> St.
- Emphasize the individuality of each of the three masses along NE 65<sup>th</sup> St.
- Modulate the interior units facing the court or light well.
- Hold back or set back the structure from the street. (Mentioned by several speakers.)
- One long façade on NE 65<sup>th</sup> St. is too much. Individualize the building masses.

### Streetscape

- Take into account that 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave NE is proposed as a greenway.
- The proposed bike lanes on 65<sup>th</sup> St. are still under consideration.
- 35<sup>th</sup> Ave NE would have cycle tracks.
- Preserve the trees in the parking strip on 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave NE.
- Ensure that there is adequate access for fire trucks.
- Widen NE 65<sup>th</sup> St. The street needs to be safe for the Assumption school kids. Widening the frontage along 65<sup>th</sup> will help.
- Dangerous exiting occurs onto NE 65<sup>th</sup> St. The developer must account for the inherent lack of safety.
- The goal is to emphasize or support the neighborhood's pedestrian character.
- Replace the sidewalks on the east and south side of the project. The sidewalks should be wider. The building should be set back from the rights of way by ten to 15 feet.

### Open space

- The courtyard is relatively narrow.
- Add more open space at grade.
- Ensure that the courtyard is open to the public.

### Aesthetics

- The style of the building should relate to the Tudor style houses in the neighborhood.

#### Programming

- How do the live/work units give back to the neighborhood?
- The intent to activate NE 65<sup>th</sup> St. is supported.

#### Parking

- Add extra parking spaces in the garage.
- Surplus parking should be available for the live/work units.

#### Amenities

- Consider access and storage of bikes in the new complex.

#### Other

- The project needs to be attractive to families.
- The development team has worked well with the Ravenna/Bryant community.

DPD received numerous emails and phone calls addressing parking and traffic congestion in the immediate neighborhood. With the number of townhouse units, single family homes and commercial uses proposed for the block, the neighbors and nearby property owners emphatically expressed their concern for congestion, safety (particularly turning onto NE 65<sup>th</sup> St), the adequacy of access for emergency vehicles, and the lack of enough on-site parking to accommodate the townhouses. Other correspondence reiterated many of the issues raised at the EDG meeting.

### 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-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.**

Maintaining the site's wooded character represents an important consideration. The Board encouraged the preservation of the cluster of mature trees that borders this project's northeast corner along 34<sup>th</sup> Ave NE.

The project should provide much greater transparency through the site to allow pedestrians and residents to enjoy the site's mature trees.

- A-2 Streetscape Compatibility. The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.**

The preliminary work by the architect conveys a respect for the streetscape. The Board, however, dismissed the architect's idea of placing planters and gates between the street and the live/work units, preferring direct access from the sidewalk to the commercial operations that occur at street level.

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

The Board requested further elaboration of the various commercial and residential entrances along the three streets. At the follow-up EDG meeting, the development team must place greater emphasis on identifying and illustrating the entrances.

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

Other than the expansion of the NE branch library and the addition of townhouses, the neighborhood has not witnessed significant redevelopment for several years. The proposed project has an opportunity to create a special sense of place for the neighborhood by focusing on small scale retail along NE 65<sup>th</sup> St. and providing quality open space along it.

**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.**

The lack of information provided about the adjacent proposed townhouse development (Lowrise zone) to the north unsettled the Board as the relationship between the proposed mixed use structure and the townhouses is an important consideration. Is the intention to develop a fluid landscape between the separate projects? Does the larger building turn its back to the townhouses? Are there fences or other landscape features that separate them? The two development sites share 273 linear feet of border.

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

Much of the project's success hinges on the quality of its open space. Only one design scenario addressed open space in a direct manner. In scheme C, the Board found the central open space too narrow, serving mostly as light well. The applicant will need to produce alternative massing options that reconsider the open space(s) as a key element to the parti. The Board conveyed its strong interest in visually connecting the exceptional trees behind the subject site in the LR2 zone with the sidewalk along NE 65<sup>th</sup> St. This would create a larger break in the building allowing opportunities for open space in the north/south direction. An open space on 65<sup>th</sup> would provide a plaza mixing both residential tenants and commercial users. An open space on the north side would embrace the green vista through the center of the lowrise zone with its proposed townhouses.

**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 this point in time, the Board supported the logic of locating the garage entrance on 34<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE.

Staff note: a traffic study will most likely evaluate the safety and functional aspects of placing access on 34<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE.

Clarify the location of bike storage for the complex for the next meeting.

**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.**

The building's corners, particularly the ground level at 32<sup>nd</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> Avenues, represent a key element in the design. Generous glazing at the corners and space for a sidewalk café would enhance the commercial uses. The corner open spaces would not substitute for true residential open space as the structure should anchor the two intersections.

**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.**

The Board supports the clear articulation of a tripartite massing along NE 65<sup>th</sup> St. The division should assist, along with quality detailing, in reducing the apparent mass along the street.

Parts of the subject site lie across from both single family and lowrise zoned properties. The architect should consider this proximity when reconsidering the massing and uses during the development of the design.

**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.**

Discussion focused on the character of the neighborhood with its Tudor style houses, craftsman bungalows and its refined mid-century institutions and apartments. The later provides a strong design antecedent that could be incorporated into the design.

**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.**

The ground plane should reflect the building's uses. Rather than allowing the live/work units to spill over into the two flanking masses along 65<sup>th</sup> St., confine the units to the central block. Treat the live/work units as true commercial spaces by removing planters and gates between the unit and the sidewalk.

- C-3 Human Scale. The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements, and details to achieve a good human scale.**

The sketches presented at the public meeting begin to convey the architect's appreciation of the nuances of designing at a fine grain.

- 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.**

By the next EDG meeting, the development team should illustrate its exploration of material choices through **character** sketches.

- 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. 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.**

How does the design team articulate the NE 65<sup>th</sup> St. edge in the design of its open space and entrances? The Board endorsed the notion of extending the commercial street front along this portion of NE 65<sup>th</sup>. Nuanced pedestrian oriented spaces at the corners and along the frontage of the building should complement the commercial storefronts.

- 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.**

By the next EDG meeting, the plans should clearly demonstrate the location of solid waste / recycling storage and how transference of material occurs.

**D-7 Personal Safety and Security. Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.**

Consider the quality and width of the sidewalks surrounding the project site. The design of the setbacks and the landscaping near and in the right of way should emphasize the neighborhood's pedestrian character.

**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.**

At the Recommendation meeting stage create a commercial signage plan for Board review.

**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.**

By the Recommendation meeting, produce a lighting concept plan for Board review.

**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.**

In addition to generous amounts of glazing at the commercial spaces, proposed live/work units should resemble in the amount of glazing and character of detail the larger commercial spaces.

**D-12 Residential Entries and Transitions. For residential projects in commercial zones, the space between the residential entry and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and be visually interesting for pedestrians.**

**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.**

With a city designated exceptional tree close to the dividing line between the LR2 and NC1 zones, the Board seeks to ensure that the proposal preserves the tree's longevity by setting back an appropriate distance. Preserving a sightline from NE 65<sup>th</sup> St to the tree also interested the board members.

The relationship between the mixed use project and the townhouses, as discussed in A-5 above, serves as an important key as to how the block maintains its open and wooded character.

- 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.**
- E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions. The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.**

As mentioned in A-1, preserving the tree cluster to the northwest of the subject development site represents a priority.

## **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

The applicant did not request departures from the land use code.

## **BOARD DIRECTION**

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

The applicant will need to present new schemes that respond to the Board guidance. In particular, the Board requested concept alternatives that reorder the open space.

The proposal for the townhouse development to the north can be found at the following web site under project number 3016468.

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

At the next EDG meeting the development should provide an overall master plan for the block.