



# City of Seattle

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



## FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3016051

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

Applicant: Ginger Garff of Johnston Architects for Polygon Homes

Date of Meeting: Monday, December 01, 2014

Board Members Present: Ivana Begley  
Eric Blank  
Martine Zettle

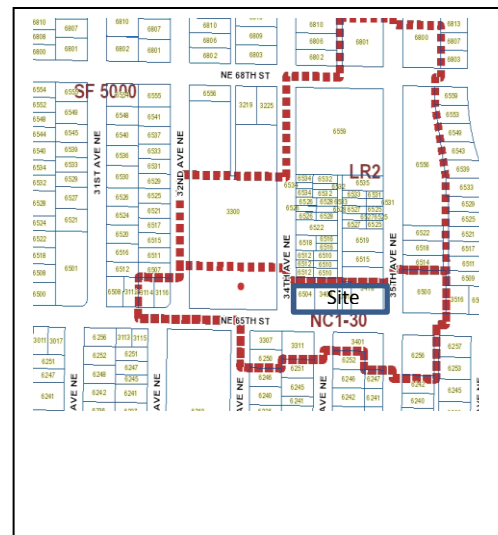
Board Members Absent: Julia Levitt  
Christina Pizana

DPD Staff Present: Shelley Bolser, substituting for Bruce 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 4,528 square feet of commercial space. Enclosed parking for 68 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.

As requested by the Board at the first EDG meeting, the architect provided two new massing options and a refinement of the preferred scheme at the Second EDG meeting. The new Scheme A splits the massing into two roughly separate east and west structures which step down in height in accordance with the grade. Building program and points of access possess similar attributes as the original schemes. Scheme B establishes two small forecourts or plazas along NE 65<sup>th</sup> St. providing relief along the long street façade. The third scheme refines an earlier option preferred by the applicant. The Board guidance below focuses on this option.

By the Recommendation meeting, the design team produced modifications to include stepped street frontage and stepped massing in response to the topography and length of the southern street frontage. The NE 65<sup>th</sup> streetscape includes active retail uses at both corners, and live-work units with large storefront glazing along NE 65<sup>th</sup> St. The ground level spaces are designed to be level with the adjacent sidewalk grade, and live-work spaces can be combined with adjacent retail spaces for future flexibility. Landscaping is proposed to frame the live work spaces and delineate the area between retail and live-work. Benches are proposed at the south property line to encourage public interaction with the live-work uses. Landscaping and benches are used to define café seating opportunities adjacent to the retail spaces at both corners. Bike racks are proposed at the east and west facades in proximity to the retail spaces.

The applicant noted that in response to the Board's comments at the Second EDG meeting, the residential entry bay has been revised to create a one story element separating the building masses on NE 65<sup>th</sup> St. Specifically since the Second EDG meeting, the elevator has been relocated from the entry bay to the building interior to further enhance the massing break and maximize visibility of the Exceptional Tree to the north.

Landscaping includes a planter at the north edge to accommodate stormwater runoff and provide a visual buffer. The north facing units include patios with planters and dense planting to create a buffer between the proposed north-facing units and the existing residences to the north. Landscaping at the street frontages is varied, including new street trees and raised steel planters.

The material palette included steel awnings with wood soffits, clear vertical cedar siding sealed with Australian Timber Oil (to preserve the warm color), wood composite siding (Parklex or similar manufacturer), brick, cable rail balconies, a steel reed fence wrapping the stairs at the east and west edges, and a glazed garage door. The intent of the palette is to present a subtle building that responds to the neighborhood context.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following comments were offered at the Final Recommendation meeting:

- The neighborhood has been working on a business plan to expand the retail uses from 35<sup>th</sup> Ave NE further to the east along NE 65<sup>th</sup> St. The proposed development is consistent with the neighborhood’s intended business plan.
- The proposed development mix of uses, size of units, and quality of design is a good response to the intent for the area. The neighborhood supports the potential for restaurant uses at this site.
- Appreciated the use of brick and the overall design concept.
- The bike racks should be designed to accommodate bike trailers, tandem bikes, and other large bikes frequently used by families in the neighborhood.

## **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.**

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* The Board didn’t offer additional comments about the tree preservation plan, but recommended approval of the proposed development and landscaping.

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

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* The Board noted that the plantings at NE 65<sup>th</sup> help to transition the grade changes along the street frontage, so the planters seem appropriate as proposed. The Board specifically noted that positive aspects of the proposed live-work design included large glazed areas, landscaping to frame the live-work units, floor plans that provide usable living space apart from the 'storefront' area of the units, and flexibility to combine the live-work units with adjacent retail spaces.

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

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* The Board approved the proposed large glazed areas at the live-work units and the landscaping strategy to treat the units similar to commercial spaces, rather than screen the front windows with landscaping.

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

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* Recommendations reflect the responses to Guidelines A-2, A-3, C-2, and D-1.

**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.**

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* The Board did not offer additional comments about the north property line and north patio landscaping, but recommended approval of the proposed development and landscaping.

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

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* The Board approved of the design response to EDG and recommended approval of the design of the entry bay and interior open space. Critical aspects of the design approval included the transparency of the mews rail, the significant increase in transparency, and the 2-story height and 14'-18' width of the second level exterior passage.

The Board acknowledged that the size and mix of residential units is beyond Design Review purview, but they supported the 2-3 bedroom units and noted that the mews will provide usable access and open space for families living in these units

**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.**

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* The Board approved the design response to EDG and recommended approval of the design of the parking access and driveway.

- 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.**

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* The Board recommended approval of the proposed design concept and material palette. The Board specifically noted the subtle use of modern forms and brick materials as a successful design response to the nearby mid-century modern and Tudor residential context.

## **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.**

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* The Board approved the design response to EDG and recommended approval of the design modifications to the entry bay, including relocation of the elevator, a large increase in transparency in this bay, and the transparency of the mews rail.

## **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.**

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* As noted in response to Guideline A-10, the Board recommended approval of the subtle use of modern forms and brick materials as a successful design response to the nearby mid-century modern and Tudor residential context.

- 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.**

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* The Board approved the commercial appearance of the live-work units and the potential for future flexibility of space between live-work and retail spaces.

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

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* As noted in response to Guideline A-10, the Board recommended approval of the proposed design concept and material palette. The Board specifically noted the subtle use of modern forms and brick materials as a successful design response to the nearby mid-century modern and Tudor residential context.

- 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.**

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* As noted in response to Guideline A-10, the Board recommended approval of the proposed design concept and material palette. The Board specifically noted the subtle use of modern forms and brick materials as a successful design response to the nearby mid-century modern and Tudor residential context.

- 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.**

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* As noted in response to Guideline A-8, the Board approved of the design response to EDG and recommended approval of the design of the parking access and driveway.

## **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.**

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* As noted in response to Guideline C-2, the Board approved the commercial appearance of the live-work units and the potential for future flexibility of space between live-work and retail spaces.

- 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.**

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* The Board recommended approval of the solid waste storage and staging area near the driveway.

The Board also acknowledged public comment regarding the need for public bicycle storage for longer or larger family bicycles. Public bike parking is proposed at the east

and west street frontages, and inside the garage, but is lacking at the NE 65<sup>th</sup> Street frontage. The Board therefore recommended a condition to add bicycle racks at NE 65<sup>th</sup> St, closer to the center of the site. The Board suggested that a longer or more linear bike rack might better accommodate the longer family bicycles.

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

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* The Board was concerned that some of the benches at the retail spaces were oriented to face into the site or were designed with blind corners that could encourage illegal behavior. The Board suggested that the applicant design the benches to face the sidewalk where the grade allows, and design the seating areas for clear sight lines, but declined to recommend a condition for this item.

**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.**

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* The Board didn't offer specific comment on the signage plan at the Recommendation meeting, but recommended approval of the overall design concept and palette.

**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.**

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* The Board didn't offer specific comment on the lighting plan at the Recommendation meeting, but recommended approval of the overall design concept and palette.

**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.**

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* The Board's recommendations are summarized in the response to Guideline C-2.

**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.**

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* The Board's recommendations are summarized in the response to Guideline B-1.



## **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.**

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* The Board's recommendations regarding the design of second level pedestrian passage through the complex) are summarized in the response to Guideline A-7.

- 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.**

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

*EDG Meeting # 2:* The applicant presented drawings preserving the cluster of trees near the edge of the site.

*Final Recommendation Meeting:* As noted in response to Guideline A-1, the Board didn't offer additional comments about the tree preservation plan, but recommended approval of the proposed development and landscaping.

## **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure was 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.

- 1. Residential Uses at Street Level (23.47A.008.A.3):** The Code requires that a maximum of 20% of the street level shall be residential use in Commercial zones in certain conditions. The applicant proposes to allow 47% residential uses at the east street frontage, to allow for the garage entry and residential entry.

This departure would provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines A-2 and A-8 by locating the garage entry on the less commercially oriented street frontage, maintaining a continuous sidewalk on the more heavily traveled pedestrian corridor of NE 65<sup>th</sup> St, and by providing commercial parking within the garage.

The Board unanimously recommended that DPD grant the departure.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The recommendation summarized above was based on the design review packet dated Monday, December 01, 2014, and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the Monday, December 01, 2014 Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, the three Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design and departures with the following condition:

1. Add bicycle racks at NE 65<sup>th</sup> St, closer to the center of the site. (D-6)

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