



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE SOUTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3016112

Address: 1606 California Avenue SW

Applicant: Neal Thompson, Roger Newell Architects

Date of Meeting: Thursday, March 06, 2014

Board Members Present: Myer Harrell (Chair)  
Laird Bennion  
Todd Bronk  
T. Frick McNamara

Board Members Absent: Daniel Skaggs

DPD Staff Present: Lindsay King

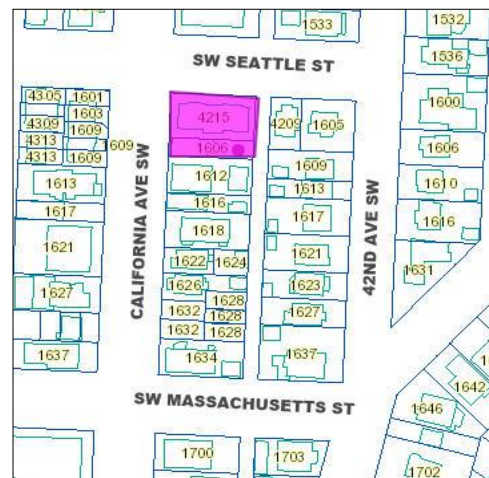
### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Lowrise Three (LR3)

Nearby Zones: North: LR3  
South: LR3  
East: SF5000  
West: LR3

Lot Area: 9,430 sq. ft.

Current Development: Apartment Building and Single Family Residence



**Surrounding Development:** The subject site is located on the southeast corner of SW Seattle Street and California Avenue SW. The subject lot and properties to the north, south and west are located within the Lowrise Three (LR3) zone. Properties to the east, across the alley, are located in the Single Family (SF5000). California Avenue SW is an arterial street serving as a primary north/south corridor for the neighborhood.

**ECAs:** None

**Neighborhood Character:** California Avenue SW serves as a primary transportation corridor containing multi-story residential apartment buildings on either side. Parcels not adjacent to California Avenue SW to the east and west are generally zoned Single Family. The neighborhood consists of one-three story residential structures. The housing type varies from midcentury brick and masonry apartment buildings, new wood frame apartment and townhouse structures, and one to two story single family homes.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Early Design Guidance application for a 3-story apartment building with 16 residential units and parking for 21 vehicles to be provided in a below grade parking garage and at ground level. The existing single family residence and four-plex are to be demolished.

**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: March 6, 2014**

## **DESIGN PRESENTATION**

The EDG packet includes materials presented at the EDG meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3016112) 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 3016112), by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

**Mailing Address:** **Public Resource Center**  
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000  
P.O. Box 34019  
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

**Email:** [PRC@seattle.gov](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the applicant presented four design alternatives. Each option includes a residential building(s) containing 14-20 units. Parking access is provided from an alley located along the east property line. Parking is provided at grade adjacent to the alley and in a shared subterranean parking garage.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following comments, issues and concerns were raised during the public comment portion of the Early Design Guidance meeting:

- Expressed support for preferred design scheme four, noting it will fit nicely into the neighborhood.
- Noted California Avenue SW is very congested and it is hard for a pedestrian to cross.
- Noted parking is difficult in the evenings and weekends.
- Felt additional density will add transients and crime.
- Felt property values will decrease due to loss in views.
- Felt building design should respect the existing view corridors and provide a massing transition to the adjacent single family zone.
- Appreciated the provided 30 foot setback to the alley lot line.
- Supported the preferred design option four, but felt the entrance lobby should be located at grade, closer to the street property line, and at the corner.
- Concerned about viability of partially below grade units and lack of daylight on the north property line.
- Would like to see the stair penthouse and elevator shaft combined to reduce height minimize bulk impacts.
- Concerned the construction of the underground parking garage may impact the older structures nearby.
- Noted that sidewalk and alley should be replaced if construction of building further damages existing infrastructure.

## **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 of highest priority for this project.

### **FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE March 6, 2014**

- 1. Massing and Materials.** The Board noted that preferred Massing Scheme Four provided the better design solution. The Board felt the massing and site design should evolve with the provided guidance.
  - a) The Board liked the variation in massing on the north façade. The Board noted that the modulation in the staggered façade provides opportunities for corner windows (CS2-D).

- b) The Board felt Massing Scheme Four provided the better design solution by minimizing the number of units facing single family zone across the alley (CS2-D).
- c) The Board felt the site design would benefit by moving the buildings to the minimum 5 foot setback along California Avenue SW. The reduced setback would provide a more substantial building presence along the street and also increase the setback along the alley across from the single family zone (PL3-B2).
- d) The Board noted the building exterior should be constructed of durable materials of high quality (DC4).

**2. California Avenue Façade and Entrance Lobby.** The preferred massing alternative located a shared entrance lobby on the SW corner of the site adjacent to California Avenue SW. The Board supported the lobby location but felt additional site design efforts were necessary to make the space successful.

- a) The Board noted that the lobby should engage the street more directly by being located closer to the street at the code required minimum setback of 5 feet (CS2-B2, PL3-A2, DC1-A)
- b) The Board directed that the lobby should be located as close to grade as possible to remove the need for exterior ramping. If ramping is necessary, the Board felt it should be located within the structure (PL3-A2).
- c) The Board directed more transparency be incorporated onto the California Avenue facade to bring eyes onto the street. The Board was particularly concerned about the large blank wall facing the street (PL2-B).
- d) Board felt the entrance lobby lighting should act as a beacon for residents and visitors to the site. The Board requested a full lighting plan at the recommendation meeting (DC4-C).

**3. Subterranean Units.** The Board was concerned about the viability of the partially below grade units and felt that additional efforts should be made to maximize natural light to these spaces.

- a) The Board noted that provided window wells must be designed to maximize natural light (CS1-A2).
- b) The Board supported the terracing of the window well to provide direct access between the unit and the amenity space. The Board felt the setbacks and ground level amenity space should be developed to provide privacy and security between the ground level residential use and the street, particularly important at the corner (PL3-B).
- c) The Board discouraged the below grade decks on California Avenue SW façade (PL3-B).
- d) At the next meeting, the Board wished to see additional details for the treatment of the subterranean access and sidewalk experience. The Board requested imagery and drawings from the sidewalk and window well locations. The Board encouraged the applicant to research successful case studies and examples of similar conditions to inform the design including key architectural and landscaping features that create successful spaces (PL3-B).

4. **Corner Treatment.** The Board felt the architectural concept should be developed to provide a corner residential treatment compatible with the scale of the lowrise zoning.
  - a) The Board noted that the corner was particularly visible traveling in the south bound direction on California Avenue SW. The Board felt the architectural response should include a large amount of glazing and substantial glass at the corner (CS2-C).
  - b) The Board felt the street level corner should be activated by the subterranean units' direct access to the setback amenity spaces (CS2B, CS2C).
  - c) The Board felt that both the building's architectural concept and the building's landscape and amenity design should be responsive to the corner location (CS2-C, DC3, CD4).
  - d) The Board noted that the decks on the north façade should be sized to be usable by residents but felt the rendering provided a balcony railing is too substantial and heavy. The Board noted the full bannister detracts from the corner treatment by locating a substantial horizontal element. The Board felt the decks should be light and airy which could be achieved by providing a glass railing (CS2-C, DC2).
  
5. **Parking and Access.** The Board agreed the parking ramp access was unresolved and needed further study.
  - a) The Board noted the current parking ramp begins at the low point of the site but felt the ramp location adjacent to the sidewalk provided a potential safety hazard. At the Recommendation Meeting the Board would like to see an analysis of a different access location further south on the alley and an analysis justifying proposed access point (DC1-B, DC1-C).
  - b) The Board recommended moving the building to 5' feet to the California Avenue SW property line would help resolve additional ramping needs for an alternative access location. The Board also was willing to review a design departure for a steeper ramp as necessary to facilitate a different access location on the alley (DC1-B).
  - c) The Board was concerned about the treatment of walls facing the driveway access. The Board felt the retaining walls used to hold grade should be treated with scaling devices and with texture (DC2-D).
  - d) The Board agreed the ground level parking along the alley should incorporate landscaping and trees to break up the expanse of concrete, soften the hardscape, and provide a buffer between the building and the single family homes across the alley. The Board felt parking spaces should be grouped with trees, in grade, between the parking spaces (PL3-B). Tree in grade (DC1-C)
  - e) Applicant should show location and access to required bike parking at the Recommendation Meeting (PL4-B, DC1-B).
  - f) At the Recommendation Meeting the Board requested vignettes demonstrating the pedestrian experience at the alley (DC1-C).
  
6. **Amenity Space.** The Board noted the project lacked residential amenity space.
  - a) The Board would like to see further development of the amenity space as usable rooms along the alley and street property lines (DC1-A, DC3 B and D).
  - b) The Board stated that the subterranean unit relationship to the sidewalk was awkward. The Board noted the ground level units should have a better spatial relationship to the exterior amenity. (DC3).

- c) The Board strongly encouraged incorporating a rooftop deck to maximize amenity space available to residents. The Board noted a rooftop deck would provide substantial views (DC3-B).
- d) The Board felt the landscape texture and pattern should relate directly to architectural pattern and texture. At Recommendation, the Board requested a landscape and hardscape plan, prepared by a landscape architect, with a copy of the green factor worksheet. (DC4-D).

## DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

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

### CONTEXT & SITE

**CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features: Use natural systems/features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.**

#### CS1-B Sunlight and Natural Ventilation

**CS1-B-2. Daylight and Shading:** Maximize daylight for interior and exterior spaces and minimize shading on adjacent sites through the placement and/or design of structures on site.

**CS2 Urban Pattern and Form: Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.**

#### CS2-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces

**CS2-B-2. Connection to the Street:** Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and public realm.

#### CS2-C Relationship to the Block

**CS2-C-1. Corner Sites:** Corner sites can serve as gateways or focal points; both require careful detailing at the first three floors due to their high visibility from two or more streets and long distances.

#### CS2-D Height, Bulk, and Scale

**CS2-D-1. Existing Development and Zoning:** Review the height, bulk, and scale of neighboring buildings as well as the scale of development anticipated by zoning for the area to determine an appropriate complement and/or transition.

**CS2-D-3. Zone Transitions:** For projects located at the edge of different zones, provide an appropriate transition or complement to the adjacent zone(s). Projects should create a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zone and the proposed development.

**CS2-D-4. Massing Choices:** Strive for a successful transition between zones where a project abuts a less intense zone.

**CS2-D-5. Respect for Adjacent Sites:** Respect adjacent properties with design and site planning to minimize disrupting the privacy of residents in adjacent buildings.

## PUBLIC LIFE

**PL2 Walkability: Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.**

### PL2-B Safety and Security

**PL2-B-1. Eyes on the Street:** Create a safe environment by providing lines of sight and encouraging natural surveillance.

**PL2-B-2. Lighting for Safety:** Provide lighting at sufficient lumen intensities and scales, including pathway illumination, pedestrian and entry lighting, and/or security lights.

**PL2-B-3. Street-Level Transparency:** Ensure transparency of street-level uses (for uses such as nonresidential uses or residential lobbies), where appropriate, by keeping views open into spaces behind walls or plantings, at corners, or along narrow passageways.

**PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.**

### PL3-A Entries

**PL3-A-2. Common Entries:** Multi-story residential buildings need to provide privacy and security for residents but also be welcoming and identifiable to visitors.

**PL3-A-4. Ensemble of Elements:** Design the entry as a collection of coordinated elements including the door(s), overhead features, ground surface, landscaping, lighting, and other features.

### PL3-B Residential Edges

**PL3-B-1. Security and Privacy:** Provide security and privacy for residential buildings through the use of a buffer or semi-private space between the development and the street or neighboring buildings.

**PL3-B-2. Ground-level Residential:** Privacy and security issues are particularly important in buildings with ground-level housing, both at entries and where windows are located overlooking the street.

**PL4 Active Transportation: Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.**

### PL4-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists

**PL4-B-2. Bike Facilities:** Facilities such as bike racks and storage, bike share stations, shower facilities and lockers for bicyclists should be located to maximize convenience, security, and safety.

## DESIGN CONCEPT

**DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.**

### DC1-A Arrangement of Interior Uses

**DC1-A-1. Visibility:** Locate uses and services frequently used by the public in visible or prominent areas, such as at entries or along the street front.

**DC1-A-2. Gathering Places:** Maximize the use of any interior or exterior gathering spaces.

**DC1-A-4. Views and Connections:** Locate interior uses and activities to take advantage of views and physical connections to exterior spaces and uses.

**DC1-B Vehicular Access and Circulation**

**DC1-B-1. Access Location and Design:** Choose locations for vehicular access, service uses, and delivery areas that minimize conflict between vehicles and non-motorists wherever possible. Emphasize use of the sidewalk for pedestrians, and create safe and attractive conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.

**DC1-C Parking and Service Uses**

**DC1-C-1. Below-Grade Parking:** Locate parking below grade wherever possible. Where a surface parking lot is the only alternative, locate the parking in rear or side yards, or on lower or less visible portions of the site.

**DC1-C-2. Visual Impacts:** Reduce the visual impacts of parking lots, parking structures, entrances, and related signs and equipment as much as possible.

**DC1-C-3. Multiple Uses:** Design parking areas to serve multiple uses such as children’s play space, outdoor gathering areas, sports courts, woonerf, or common space in multifamily projects.

**DC1-C-4. Service Uses:** Locate and design service entries, loading docks, and trash receptacles away from pedestrian areas or to a less visible portion of the site to reduce possible impacts of these facilities on building aesthetics and pedestrian circulation.

**DC2 Architectural Concept: Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.**

**DC2-A Massing**

**DC2-A-1. Site Characteristics and Uses:** Arrange the mass of the building taking into consideration the characteristics of the site and the proposed uses of the building and its open space.

**DC2-A-2. Reducing Perceived Mass:** Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of larger projects.

**DC2-B Architectural and Façade Composition**

**DC2-B-1. Façade Composition:** Design all building façades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all façades are attractive and well-proportioned.

**DC2-B-2. Blank Walls:** Avoid large blank walls along visible façades wherever possible. Where expanses of blank walls, retaining walls, or garage façades are unavoidable, include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians.

**DC2-C Secondary Architectural Features**

**DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest:** Add depth to façades where appropriate by incorporating balconies, canopies, awnings, decks, or other secondary elements into the



façade design. Add detailing at the street level in order to create interest for the pedestrian and encourage active street life and window shopping (in retail areas).

**DC2-C-2. Dual Purpose Elements:** Consider architectural features that can be dual purpose— adding depth, texture, and scale as well as serving other project functions.

#### **DC2-D Scale and Texture**

**DC2-D-1. Human Scale:** Incorporate architectural features, elements, and details that are of human scale into the building facades, entries, retaining walls, courtyards, and exterior spaces in a manner that is consistent with the overall architectural concept

**DC2-D-2. Texture:** Design the character of the building, as expressed in the form, scale, and materials, to strive for a fine-grained scale, or “texture,” particularly at the street level and other areas where pedestrians predominate.

#### **DC2-E Form and Function**

**DC2-E-1. Legibility and Flexibility:** Strive for a balance between building use legibility and flexibility. Design buildings such that their primary functions and uses can be readily determined from the exterior, making the building easy to access and understand. At the same time, design flexibility into the building so that it may remain useful over time even as specific programmatic needs evolve.

**DC3 Open Space Concept: Integrate open space design with the building design so that they complement each other.**

#### ***Beacon Hill Supplemental Guidance:***

##### **DC3-A Building-Open Space Relationship**

**DC3-A-1. Interior/Exterior Fit:** Develop an open space concept in conjunction with the architectural concept to ensure that interior and exterior spaces relate well to each other and support the functions of the development.

##### **DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities**

**DC3-B-1. Meeting User Needs:** Plan the size, uses, activities, and features of each open space to meet the needs of expected users, ensuring each space has a purpose and function.

**DC3-B-4. Multifamily Open Space:** Design common and private open spaces in multifamily projects for use by all residents to encourage physical activity and social interaction.

##### **DC3-C Design**

**DC3-C-2. Amenities/Features:** Create attractive outdoor spaces suited to the uses envisioned for the project.

**DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.**

##### **DC4-A Exterior Elements and Finishes**

**DC4-A-1. 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.

**DC4-A-2. Climate Appropriateness:** Select durable and attractive materials that will age well in Seattle’s climate, taking special care to detail corners, edges, and transitions.

**DC4-C Lighting**

**DC4-C-1. Functions:** Use lighting both to increase site safety in all locations used by pedestrians and to highlight architectural or landscape details and features such as entries, signs, canopies, plantings, and art.

**DC4-C-2. Avoiding Glare:** Design project lighting based upon the uses on and off site, taking care to provide illumination to serve building needs while avoiding off-site night glare and light pollution.

**DC4-D Trees, Landscape, and Hardscape Materials**

**DC4-D-1. Choice of Plant Materials:** Reinforce the overall architectural and open space design concepts through the selection of landscape materials.

**DC4-D-2. Hardscape Materials:** Use exterior courtyards, plazas, and other hard surfaced areas as an opportunity to add color, texture, and/or pattern and enliven public areas through the use of distinctive and durable paving materials. Use permeable materials wherever possible.

**DC4-D-3. Long Range Planning:** Select plants that upon maturity will be of appropriate size, scale, and shape to contribute to the site as intended.

**DC4-D-4. Place Making:** Create a landscape design that helps define spaces with significant elements such as trees.

**DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

At the time of the **FINAL** Early Design Guidance no departures were requested.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the **FINAL EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE** meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application.