



# City of Seattle

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



## FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3016188

Address: 414 Northeast Ravenna Boulevard

Applicant: Paroline and Associates

Date of Meeting: Monday, 18 August 2014

Board Members Present: Ivana Begley  
Eric Blank  
Julia Levitt

Board Members Absent: Christina Pizana  
Martine Zettle

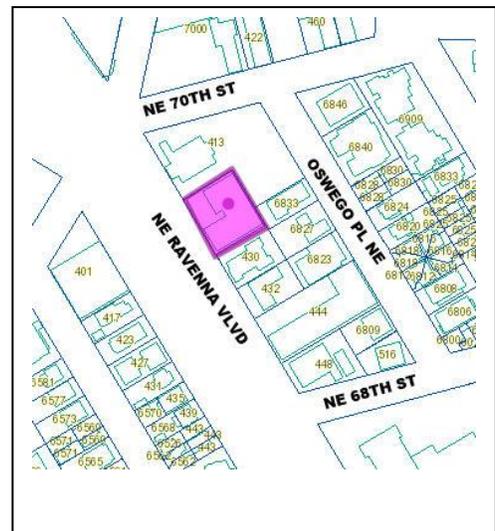
DPD Staff Present: Lisa Rutzick

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial Two with a 40' height limit. (NC2 40).

Zoning Pattern: The site lies within a NC2 and NC3 with 40' and 60' height limits designated area that forms the Green Lake commercial district, an area within the Green Lake Residential Urban Village. To the east and south, the zoning transitions to multi-family Lowrise (LR3) zoning which extends to I-5.

Lot Area: 11,000 sq. ft. A mostly flat site with a declension of six feet on its south portion.



Current Development: Surface parking lot.

Access: NE Ravenna Blvd.

Surrounding Development & Neighborhood Character: Located within the Green Lake Residential Urban Village, the site's neighbors include apartment and condominium dwellings, mixed-use structures and commercial buildings. To the north, the Florera, a four-story condominium, contains 59 units and street level retail including a Key Bank and smaller retail tenants. The Florera wraps around the northeast corner of the subject site. Directly south lies an eight unit apartment building followed by a mixed-use condominium with 13 units and street level commercial space. To the east lies a one-story wood frame apartment building. Across Ravenna Blvd. sits a retail strip building with a Thai restaurant, dry cleaners and a small pharmacy.

Recently built projects in the neighborhood include the predominantly metal clad Circa Green Lake, the Green Lake with its concave plaza and the nearly complete Green Lake Village to house a new PCC grocery.

Ravenna Boulevard forms a gracious tree lined entry into the heart of the Green Lake neighborhood. It joins Woodlawn Ave N. and Green Lake Dr. which partially circles the lake.

ECAs: No mapped environmental critical area.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes a four-story mixed use structure containing 62 residential units above commercial space and a live/work unit at ground level. Parking for 16 vehicles to be provided in a below grade parking garage.

## DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The applicant illustrated nine variations for the building footprint. In each of the three massing scenarios presented at the EDG meeting, three floors of residences rest on a plinth housing commercial space, a live work unit, and access to a below grade garage. If one imagines a mostly cubic form placed on the site, Scheme One removes the northeast and southwest corners above the first level creating two open terraces at the second floor. The northeast terrace would be nearly contiguous with the Florera courtyard. A double loaded corridor with a dog leg allows residential units to face east and west. Circulation towers occur at the north and edges of

the building. A more traditional courtyard scheme, Scheme Two has a central open space or large light well at the second level with stairs and elevators situated at the north and south ends.

The third proposal carves an entry plaza off Ravenna Boulevard with wings of the building flanking it. The schematic site plan illustrates an eight foot setback from the west property line and a five foot setback at the south end. On the north, the façade setback varies from the south wall of the Florera. The central court congregates entries for the lobby of the residential units, the commercial space and the live/work unit.

By the Recommendation meeting, the applicant had refined the third option based on the Board guidance. The live/work unit has been replaced with the residential entry and lobby space and the spaces flanking the courtyard are designated for retail use. The transit-orientated nature of the proposed development has been refined to include 10 parking spaces, all of which will be occupied by building owned electric vehicles available for tenant use.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Several members of the public affixed their names to the Recommendation meeting sign-in sheet. Speakers raised the following issues:

- Clarified that the units are apartments, not condos.
- Would like security awareness for the courtyard space and vehicle access. In particular, the garage should be gated at the bottom the driveway.
- Concerned about the noise levels of future retail uses during evening hours.
- Excited about the design that is a higher quality precedent compared to other recent development. Liked the clean, modern lines, location of the retail at the sidewalk, expansive glass storefront design, and reduced driveway width.
- Pleased that courtyard concerns have all be addressed and liked potential rooftop trellis feature.
- The Green Lake Community Council stated they are supportive of the design, the transit-oriented design and efforts to get people out of cars; however, they remain concerned with the lack of parking in the project. Also like the potential rooftop trellis feature. Would like to see permanent wood benches in the courtyard. Supported the overhead canopies along the sidewalk.

## **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.

Green Lake-specific supplemental guidance:

- **Lakefront Orientation:** In areas adjacent to Green Lake Park the building should be sited to acknowledge and orient to the lake and park.
- **Views of Lake:** Numerous streets offer views of, and pedestrian access to, the lake. Consider siting the building to take advantage of these views and to enhance views from the public right-of-way. Methods to accomplish this include setting the building back from lake views, placing landscape elements and street trees to frame views rather than block them, and providing pedestrian spaces with views of the lake.
- **Curved and Discontinuous Streets:** The community's street pattern responds to the lake by breaking with the city's standard north-south and east-west grid pattern. This creates numerous discontinuous streets, street offsets, and curved streets, which are an aspect of the community character. New development can take advantage of such street patterns by providing special features that complement these unique spaces.
- **Entry Locations:** Within the Green Lake Planning Area, certain locations serve as entry points into neighborhood and commercial areas. Development of properties at these "Entry Locations" should include elements suggesting an entry or gateway. Examples include a clock tower, turret or other architectural features, kiosks, benches, signage, landscaping, public art or other features that contribute to the demarcation of the area.
- **Heart Locations:** Several important intersections have been identified as "Heart Locations". Heart Locations differ from Entry Locations in that they are intersections that serve as the perceived center of commercial and social activity. Development at Heart Locations should enhance their central character through appropriate site planning and architecture. In addition to promoting pedestrian activity, these sites have a high priority for improvements to the public realm. A building's primary entry and facade should face the intersection. Other amenities to consider are: special paving, landscaping, additional public open space provided by curb bulbs and entry plazas. Developers should review programmed public improvements listed in the Green Lake 20/20 Plan.

**Recommendation Meeting.** The Board was satisfied with the continued provision and further development of this entry courtyard space.

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

Green Lake-specific supplemental guidance:

A continuous street wall is an important design consideration within Green Lake's commercial and mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented areas.

- **Aurora Avenue North:** A continuous street wall is less of a consideration on Aurora Avenue N, where numerous parking lots punctuate the streetscape. In this area, a more pleasant and consistent streetscape can be achieved by reinforcing the rhythm of alternating buildings and well-landscaped vehicle access areas. Parking lots should be placed at the rear and to the sides of buildings, and the buildings should be located near the street. Parking lot landscaping and screening are particularly important in improving the appearance of the Aurora Avenue North corridor.
- **Multifamily Residential Areas:** Landscaping in the required front setbacks of new multifamily development is an important siting and design consideration to help reinforce desirable streetscape continuity.

**Meeting Recommendation:** The Board was pleased with the continued design development that responds to and reflects the street wall established by the abutting building.

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

**Recommendation Meeting:** The Board was very pleased with the lobby relocation to anchor the back wall of the entry courtyard.

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

**Green Lake-specific supplemental guidance:**

Pedestrian activity is a high priority in the Green Lake business areas. It is recognized, however, that within commercial zones, the appropriateness of traditional storefronts may depend upon location, adjacent properties and the type of street on which the development fronts. In the case of a mixed-use building, for example, at the intersection of an arterial and a residential street, it might be more appropriate to place non-storefront commercial facades on the quieter residential street. In such cases, the following can contribute to a commercial facade that exhibits a character and presence that achieves a sensitive transition from commercial to residential uses:

- slightly less transparency than a standard storefront window;
- recessed entries;
- landscaping along the building base and entry; and
- minimized glare from exterior lighting.

**Recommendation Meeting:** The Board was very pleased that the earlier guidance was adhered to, thus enhancing the courtyard as a more activated space as the forecourt will be lined with active uses.

- 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.**

**Recommendation Meeting:** The Board greatly supported the moves to increase the setbacks on the rear and side yards from the previous proposal to respond to and respect the adjacent neighbors.

The Board agreed that the proposed trellis at the rooftop supports the design aesthetic of the building and screens the rooftop equipment. If such a trellis is permitted by the building code, then it would be a positive feature for the building.

- 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.**

**Green Lake-specific supplemental guidance:**

- **Residential Buildings:** Residences on the ground floor should be raised for residents' privacy, if allowed by site conditions. Well landscaped, shallow front yard setbacks are also typical and appropriate.
- **Mixed-Use Buildings:** For mixed-use buildings with residential units over commercial ground floor uses, consider locating the primary residential entry on the side street rather than in the main commercial area. This maintains a continuous commercial storefront while increasing privacy for the residential units.

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

**Green Lake-specific supplemental guidance:**

The Design Review Board may reduce the amount of open space required by the Land Use Code if the project substantially contributes to the objectives of the guideline by:

- **Creating a substantial courtyard-style open space (see sketch below) that is visually accessible to the public and that extends to the public realm.**
- **Setting back development to improve a view corridor.**
- **Setting upper stories of buildings back to provide solar access and/or to reduce impacts on neighboring single-family residences.**
- **Providing open space within the streetscape or other public rights-of-way contiguous with the site. Such public spaces should be large enough to include streetscape amenities that encourage gathering. For example, a curb bulb with outdoor seating adjacent to active retail would be acceptable.**

**Recommendation Meeting:** The Board was pleased with the continued provision of this courtyard space and further development of the design details.

**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.

**Recommendation Meeting:** The Board wholeheartedly supported the reduced driveway width from the previous design to minimize intrusion on the pedestrian environment. See also C-5.

**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.

**Green Lake-specific supplemental guidance:**

Some properties adjacent to Green Lake’s Neighborhood Commercial areas are zoned single-family, but have a small portion zoned Neighborhood Commercial. In general, these properties can only be developed with single-family houses. In such cases where a property with more-intensive zoning is adjacent to a property that contains such split zoning, the following design techniques are encouraged to improve the transition to the split-zoned lot:

- Building setbacks similar to those specified in the Land Use Code for zone edges where a proposed development project within a more intensive zone abuts a lower intensive zone.
- Techniques specified in the Citywide Design Guidelines A-5 and B-1.

Along a zone edge without an alley, consider additional methods that help reduce the potential ‘looming’ effect of a much larger structure in proximity to smaller, existing buildings.

- One possibility is allowing the proposed structure’s ground floor to be built to the property line and significantly stepping back the upper levels from the adjacent building (see sketch below). The building wall at the property line should be designed in a manner sympathetic to the existing structure(s), particularly regarding privacy and aesthetic issues.

**Recommendation Meeting:** The Board greatly supported the moves to increase the setbacks on all of the rear and side yards from the previous proposal to respond to and respect the adjacent neighbors. The northwest corner that faces the Florera was also further recessed to reduce the impact on the Florera courtyard open space (see page 11

of the packet for specific dimensions). The more detailed shadow analysis illustrated the reduced impacts from the increased setbacks on the neighboring buildings.

## 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.

Green Lake-specific supplemental guidance:

- **Distinct Architectural Themes and Styles:** Aurora Avenue North Corridor - Recognize Aurora's 1920-1950 commercial character while making the area more friendly to the pedestrian. Residential Urban Village - Build on the core's classical architectural styles (e.g., community center, library, Marshall School, VFW building). Tangletown (55th/56th Street corridor and Meridian) and 65th/Latona – Build on both commercial areas' human scale elements, particularly the traditional storefront details and proportions of early 1900s vernacular commercial buildings.
- **Signage:** The design and placement of signs plays an important role in the visual character and identity of the community. While regulatory sign review is not in the purview of design review, integration with the overall architectural expression of a building and appropriate scale and orientation are important design considerations. Franchises should not be given exceptions to these guidelines. Except within the Aurora Avenue North corridor, signage should be oriented to pedestrians.
- **Facade Articulation:** Multi-family residential structures - The façade articulation of new multifamily residential buildings (notably in Lowrise zones) should be compatible with the surrounding single-family architectural context. Neighborhood commercial structures - Modulation in the street-fronting façade of a mixed-use structure is less important when an appropriate level of details is present to break up the facade.

**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.

Green Lake-specific supplemental guidance:

- **Building Materials in Green Lake's Individual Districts**

1. Green Lake Residential Urban Village
  2. Tangletown (55th/56th Corridor and Meridian)
  3. 65th at Latona
- Special material requirements and recommendations
    1. Metal siding
    2. Masonry units
    3. Wood siding and shingles
  - Discouraged Materials
    1. Mirrored glass
    2. Sprayed-on finish

**Recommendation Meeting:** The Board wholeheartedly supported the proposed material and color palette of this handsome design. Specifically, the Board noted the contrasting color choice of darker along the edges with the light cream-colored porcelain tiles in the courtyard to reflect light and open up that space. The ombre arrangement of the dark grey colored hardiplank siding dimensions to create a striated effect creates an interesting and unusual pattern. The Board suggested that instead of the wood grain print of the proposed hardiplank, that a flat (artisan) panel be used.

The Board also noted that the color scheme shown on the packet renderings and elevation was warmer than the actual material samples. The Board recommended a condition that the exterior hardiplank color palette be altered to more closely reflect the color scheme depicted in the presentation packet of a warmer dark grey than the material board samples.

- 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.**

**Recommendation Meeting:** The Board unanimously supported the narrowing of the driveway width to minimize the impact on the pedestrian environment.

<b>D. Pedestrian Environment</b>
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- 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.**

**Green Lake-specific supplemental guidance:**

- **Streetscape amenities:** New developments are encouraged to work with the Design Review Board and interested citizens to provide features that enhance the public realm. The Board would be willing to consider a departure in open space requirements if the project proponent provides an acceptable plan from, but not limited to: curb

**bulbs adjacent to active retail spaces, pedestrian-oriented street lighting, and street furniture.**

**Recommendation Meeting:** The Board was very pleased with the configurations, materiality and activation of the courtyard design presented. Since much of the courtyard activation is dependent on a future retail tenant embracing the space, the Board did agree, however, on a condition that the planters and seating shown in the packet be provided and at the time of the Certificate of Occupancy to ensure that there is not a gap in time between the building opening and the time that potential future tenants add their own furniture and plantings to the space.

- 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.**

**Recommendation Meeting:** The Board was satisfied that the solid waste would be stored internally at grade, bike storage will be accommodated in the garage and loading would occur from a designated space on the street.

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

**Recommendation Meeting:** The Board discussed the security concerns of the driveway and was pleased with the inclusion of a gate at the garage entrance. The Board did recommend a camera be installed at the driveway entrance for further security protection. See also D-10.

The Board was satisfied that the entry courtyard had been design to preserve clear sight lines, lighting and activating uses.

- 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.**

**Recommendation Meeting:** The Board did not discuss the signage specifically, but appeared to be satisfied with the concept signage plan contained on page 28 of the presentation packet.

- 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.**

**Recommendation Meeting:** The Board was pleased with the well integrated and design light fixture palette and locations. The Board discussed at length the addition of overhead cable lighting above the courtyard to create a gentle sense of containment or enclosure of this urban room. The Board declined to make this a condition of the project,

but strongly encouraged the applicant to explore this lighting feature, which would also further the safety and security of the courtyard as identified under D-7.

- 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.**

**Recommendation Meeting:** The Board was very enthusiastic with the proposed expansive storefront glazing system that extends close to the ground providing a greater sense of interaction between the retail uses and pedestrian activity at the sidewalk.

## **E. Landscaping**

- 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.**

**Recommendation Meeting:** The Board was pleased with the design of the ground level courtyard space – see also A-4, A-7 and D-1.

The Board was supportive of the well programmed and design rooftop open space and amenities. One concern arose, however, regarding design measures to prevent the bocce ball from inadvertently going over the top of the building. The Board recommended a condition that additional measures are taken to prevent bocce balls from going beyond the rooftop, such as closer spacing of the cable rails or solid posts along the roof deck perimeter.

The Board also suggested that the tree species identified at the courtyard be a less dark (purple colored) species and more of a columnar green tree type to keep the courtyard light and airy.

- 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.**

**Green Lake-specific supplemental guidance:**

- **Celebrate the Olmsted heritage: Green Lake Park, Ravenna Boulevard and Lower Woodland Park are visible and accessible examples of the Olmsted brothers' design. New development should build on this character by employing informal groupings of large and small trees and shrubs. A mix of deciduous, evergreen, and ornamental plant materials is appropriate. Continuous rows of street trees contrasting with the informal, asymmetric landscaping of open spaces are also typical.**

**Recommendation Meeting:** The Board was satisfied that the proposed design responded to this earlier guidance.

**DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

The Board’s recommendation on the requested departure is 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(s). At the meeting, the applicant presented a departure from driveway width, which was not necessary as the proposed width meets the Code requirement.

STANDARD	REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	JUSTIFICATION	RECOMMENDATION
1. Street Level Facing Facades SMC 23.47A.008A.3	Street-level, street-facing facades shall be located within 10’ of the structure lot line unless wider sidewalks, plazas or other approved landscaped or open spaces are provided.	Proposed a portion of the street-level, street-facing facades to be 25’ from the lot line to allow for a plaza space.	Creates an urban amenity at street level that engages with the pedestrian streetscape, as well as allows for retail spillover to activate the space in conjunction with the building entry. (A-4, D-1)	Unanimously recommended approval.

**Recommendations:** The recommendations summarized below were based on the plans and models submitted at the August 18th, 2014 meeting. Design, siting or architectural details not specifically identified or altered in these recommendations are expected to remain as presented in the plans and other drawings available at the August 18, 2014 public meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities, and reviewing the plans and renderings, the Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design with conditions and the requested development standard departure from the requirements of the Land Use Code (listed below). The Board recommends the following CONDITIONS for the project. (Authority referred in the letter and number in parenthesis):

1. The planters and seating shown in the packet shall be provided and at the time of the Certificate of Occupancy. (A-2, D-1, C-1)
2. The exterior hardiplank color palette shall be altered to more closely reflect the color scheme depicted in the presentation packet of a warmer dark grey than the material board samples shown at the meeting. (C-4)
3. Additional measures are taken to prevent bocce balls from going beyond the rooftop, such as closer spacing of the cable rails or solid posts along the roof deck perimeter. (D-7, E-2)