



FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3016541

Address: 4046 8TH Avenue Northeast

Applicant: Jeff Wegener of Build Urban

Date of Meeting: Monday, July 28, 2014

Board Members Present: Martine Zettle, Chair
Ivana Begley
Eric Blank
Julia Levitt

Board Members Absent: Christina Pizana

DPD Staff Present: Carly Guillory, Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Lowrise 3 (LR3)

Nearby Zones: (North) LR3
(South) LR3
(East) LR3
(West) LR3

Lot Area: 3,569 square feet



Current Development:

The subject site includes one single-family structure. Vehicular and pedestrian access is via 8th Avenue Northeast. This existing structure is proposed for demolition.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The subject site is within the University District Northwest Urban Center Village. Surrounding development and neighborhood character primarily consists of multiple-family and single-family structures of various architectural styles.

Access:

Pedestrian access is proposed from 8th Avenue Northeast. No vehicular access is proposed.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes one four-story residential structure containing 37 units. No on-site vehicular parking is proposed. Covered bicycle parking is proposed on the east portion of the site.

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The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3016541) at this website:

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp.

The packet is also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

Mailing Public Resource Center

Address: 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The architect presented three design concepts. All schemes propose a four-story residential structure containing studio units with no on-site vehicular parking.

Option 1 proposed two masses conjoined by the shared stairwell. Ground level amenity area was proposed along the perimeter of the structure. Window wells provided light and air to those units in the basement. The front residential entry faced the street, and was elevated.

Option 2 united the mass, creating a central interior corridor with stairwells at the west and east ends. The main residential entrance faced the street, accessed via a staircase elevating it from the right-of-way. A pedestrian walkway along the north property line lead to the ground level amenity area to the east of the structure.

Option 3, the preferred option, proposed a single mass with modulation at the west and east. The main residential entry was accompanied by an extended podium, providing additional space and opportunity for human interaction at the street level. A secondary entrance and ground level amenity area were located at the east façade. No on-site vehicular parking was proposed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were offered at the Early Design Guidance 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.

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The Citywide and Neighborhood specific 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-C Topography

CS1-C-2. Elevation Changes: Use the existing site topography when locating structures and open spaces on the site.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the difference in elevation between the main entrance at the street, and the accessible entrance at the north facade. The Board directed the applicant to create a unified entry, and recommended consideration of including a ramp at the northwest corner of the site to the elevated entrance.

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-1. Site Characteristics: Allow characteristics of sites to inform the design, especially where the street grid and topography create unusually shaped lots that can add distinction to the building massing. surrounding open spaces.

CS2-C Relationship to the Block

CS2-C-2. Mid-Block Sites: Look to the uses and scales of adjacent buildings for clues about how to design a mid-block building. Continue a strong street-edge and respond to datum lines of adjacent buildings at the first three floors.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board recommended that the design should respond to the south, and locate windows and materials to respond to the adjacent structure.

CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes

CS3-A-2. Contemporary Design: Explore how contemporary designs can contribute to the development of attractive new forms and architectural styles; as expressed through use of new materials or other means.

CS3-A-4. Evolving Neighborhoods: In neighborhoods where architectural character is evolving or otherwise in transition, explore ways for new development to establish a positive and desirable context for others to build upon in the future.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board encouraged design development that sets a high quality content for future development. The Board encouraged a design that compliments, not duplicates, surrounding design.

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-A Accessibility

PL2-A-1. Access for All: Provide access for people of all abilities in a manner that is fully integrated into the project design. Design entries and other primary access points such that all visitors can be greeted and welcomed through the front door.

PL2-A-2. Access Challenges: Add features to assist pedestrians in navigating sloped sites, long blocks, or other challenges.

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-C Weather Protection

PL2-C-2. Design Integration: Integrate weather protection, gutters and downspouts into the design of the structure as a whole, and ensure that it also relates well to neighboring buildings in design, coverage, or other features.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the importance of access for all, and directed the applicant to design the primary access point to be welcoming for visitors and residents.

The Board encouraged further development of the floor plan to encourage eyes on the street. The Board suggested relocating the stairwell to provide additional opportunities for windows.

The Board supported the weather protection at the main entrance, but was concerned it may provide opportunity for unwanted access to the windows above, creating a safety concern. The Board requested additional information illustrating this relationship.

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-1. Design Objectives: Design primary entries to be obvious, identifiable, and distinctive with clear lines of sight and lobbies visually connected to the street.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board supported the use of elements such as overhead features, landscaping, and lighting at the main entry. The entry should be clearly identifiable and provide access for people of all abilities.

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-1. Early Planning: Consider existing and future bicycle traffic to and through the site early in the process so that access and connections are integrated into the project along with other modes of travel.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board was concerned that ten bicycle parking spaces may not accommodate the potential need generated by this project. The location of the bicycle parking also raised some questions. The Board recommended that the bicycle facilities be located to maximize convenience, security, and safety. The Board requested further development of the location, screening, and functionality of the bicycle parking and its relationship to the courtyard and unit windows.

DESIGN CONCEPT

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

DC1-A Arrangement of Interior Uses

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

DC1-C Parking and Service Uses

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the potential functionality of the trash/recycle at the proposed location along the south property line, and was concerned that the trash/recycle receptacles may end up on the pathway. The Board recommended further development of the trash/receptacle staging area, and requested additional information regarding function, aesthetics, screening, and odor mitigation. The Board suggested consideration of landscape screening and/or moving the trash/recycle area closer to the street. Perspectives from the street were requested.

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-B Architectural and Facade Composition

DC2-B-1. Façade Composition: Design all building facades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all facades 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 facades are unavoidable, include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed the project has view opportunities to the west and south, and the fenestration on the south façade is a good response to this context. Architectural elements and/or materials should be used to mitigate blank walls and offer privacy measures. The Board agreed that the large blank wall component of the west façade is a strong architectural statement; however, it is not a good response to the neighborhood context, considering views to the west and security at the street level. The Board directed the applicant to avoid large blank walls on the west façade and north façade. The Board requested additional information about the north façade and window placement relative to the pedestrian path and bicycle parking.

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

DC3-C Design

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed that the consolidation of multiple open spaces into one area, as proposed in Option 3, is preferable. The Board supported the location of the courtyard, and requested more information regarding the functionality and aesthetics of the open space and how it relates to the building, bicycle parking, windows, and the property to the east.

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-B Signage

DC4-B-2. Coordination with Project Design: Develop a signage plan within the context of architectural and open space concepts, and coordinate the details with façade design, lighting, and other project features to complement the project as a whole, in addition to the surrounding context.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the neighborhood context, and recommended that the design utilize attractive elements and materials to complement, not replicate, surrounding development. The Board agreed that landscaping and street trees should not be compromised to aid in visibility of the address sign from the street. The Board recommended the use of landscape and/or hardscape to define the front entrance.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

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

BOARD DIRECTION

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