City of Seattle

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

DESIGN REVIEW

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

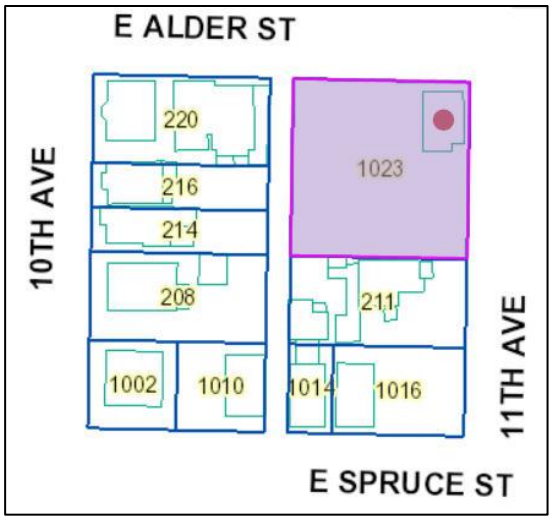
Project Number:	3016953
Address:	1023 East Alder St
Applicant:	George Gibbs of Mithun Architects for Spectrum Development
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, May 14, 2014
Board Members Present:	Natalie Gualy, Chair Michael Austin Curtis Bigelow Dan Foltz Cristina Orr-Cahall Kevin Price
DPD Staff Present:	Shelley Bolser

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Midrise (MR)

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

Lot Area: 14,458 square feet



Current Development:

The existing site includes one residential structure, constructed in the early 20th century.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The immediate context consists of recent multi-family development to the west and north, older residential development to the south and east, and a mix of residential buildings in other nearby lots. The nearby vicinity includes a mix of early 20th multi-family and single family residential to the south and east, with newer Midrise multi-family development to the west and north.

The site is located on the east slope of First Hill, approximately half way between the primary arterials of Boren Avenue, Broadway, and 12th Avenue. Boren Ave connects southeast Seattle through the International District, First Hill, Capitol Hill, and Downtown. Broadway intersects Boren Ave 2 blocks west of the site and connects Yesler Terrace with First Hill, Capitol Hill, and Montlake neighborhoods. 12th Ave connects Capitol Hill with the International District, and serves as the dividing line between First Hill to the west and the Central District to the east.

The area is served by frequent bus transit routes and will soon be served by the Streetcar, with access nearby at E. Yesler Way and at Broadway.

Access:

The subject property is adjacent to an alley and two street frontages, but doesn't appear to have any off-street parking.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
The proposal is for a 7-story, 84 unit residential building with parking for 13 vehicles located below grade. The existing residential structure would be demolished.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE May 14, 2014

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3016953) 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 Address: **Public Resource Center**
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The applicant explained that this proposal is related to two other nearby developments proposed by the applicant team: Anthem at 12th Ave and E. Yesler Way, and Decibel at 11th Ave and E. Alder St.

The applicant noted that many of the nearby buildings have a focus to the interior of the site. The intent of the proposed development is to provide townhouse style units at the base of this building to relate to the street frontage.

Due to the steeply sloping site with the high point at the alley, the parking access is proposed from the southeast corner of the site.

The applicant showed three massing options at the EDG meeting. The Code compliant option included open space at grade, with the residential and parking entries at 11th Ave. The applicant noted that this option is not preferred since the open space would be located at the alley and may not be well-used.

Massing Option 2 and the preferred option (Option 3) included open space at the roof. Both options also required departures from the maximum garage door size and the structure width. The top floor of both options stepped with grade, with the lower portion of the roof providing usable rooftop deck. Option 2 showed the rooftop deck at the southeast corner. Option 3 showed the rooftop deck at the east edge and a dog area at the north edge. Both Options 2 and 3 were shown with the residential entry at E. Alder St and the garage entry at 11th Ave.

Option 3 included townhouse style units at the ground floor, with modulation to express the ground related units. The upper levels included protruding bays for modulations.

The conceptual landscape plan showed layered landscaping at all the edges, with a landscape buffer at the south edge, adjacent to the neighboring residential building. Street trees and planter strips were shown on both street frontages, with a bioretention cell at the northwest corner. The applicant explained that the patios at grade would be 3'-4' above grade at the southwest edge, and would measure approximately 5' deep. The residential units at the ground floor at the south elevation would be located to transition with grade.

The applicant noted that they have the option to lease parking on a nearby site for the future building tenants, should the demand arise.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comments offered at the meeting included the following:

- Questioned the size and mix of units.

- Questioned whether a retaining is proposed at the south edge of the site? The applicant responded that none is anticipated at this time.
- More parking should be provided than currently proposed.
- The design is too boxy.
- DPD summarized public comments received up to the meeting, including:
    - Seattle Parks Department has offered to buy the property for a Park and the neighbors would like to see the site developed in that manner.
    - Development should be set back from the street frontages and provide usable public open space at grade.
    - The building should include an indoor community room that is open for use by the neighborhood, since the neighborhood lacks community meeting rooms.

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.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE May 14, 2014

1. **Massing Options and Design Concept.** The Board supported massing Option 3, with additional modulation, façade articulation, and expansion of the townhouse expression. (CS1-B, CS1-C, DC2-A, DC2-B)
    a. The majority of the Board supported the preferred massing option, but recommended additional modulation and further development of the overall façade treatment. (DC2-A, DC2-B)
    b. The Board noted that the proposed massing complements other large buildings in the neighborhood, steps with the challenging grade change, and uses the open space at roof level helps to emphasize the stepped massing. (CS1-C, CS2-D)
    c. The existing steep topography is a difficult condition, and the Board supported the conceptual landscape plan and the townhouse units that step with grade at the building base. (CS2-B)

2. **Design Concept.** The preliminary design concept sketches were supported by the Board, with direction for further development. (DC2-B, DC2-C, DC2-C)
    a. Attention to detail is needed on E. Alder St. The materials should be used to express the fully express the design parti. (CS3-A, DC2-B, DC2-C, DC2-D)
        i. The Board offered one example of weaving the concrete base and the vertically expressed materials to play off of the topography changes.
    b. Visually interesting and pedestrian scale materials should be used at the base of the building to relate to the pedestrian realm. The Board suggested using materials that reference the context of the cobblestone paving in the street. (CS3-A, DC2-C, DC2-D, DC4-A)
    c. The two-story townhouse expression should extend around the corners of the building. (CS2-B, CS2-C)

3. **Street and Alley Frontages.** The street and alley frontages should be designed to respond to grade changes, create safe and engaging transitions between residential uses and sidewalk areas, and the building express a consistent design on all four facades. (CS1-C, CS2-B, PL2-B, PL3-A, PL3-B, DC2-B)
    a. The townhouses at E. Alder St should step with grade. (CS1-C, CS2-B)
    b. The street level units should be designed for residents' safety and security, as well as engaging with the street. (PL2-B, PL3-B, DC4-C)
    c. The Board supported the concept of minimal modulation at the alley, but recommended that the alley façade be designed with materials, articulation, and other design efforts to create consistency with the other three building facades. (DC2-B, DC4-A)
    d. The Board noted that the sloped south edge has the potential for a two-story base expression that steps with grade, similar to the north and east facades. (CS1-C, DC2-B)
    e. The street facing facades (north and east) should be modified to include additional modulation and articulation, beyond the conceptual sketches and preferred massing shown at EDG. (CS2-D, DC2-A, DC2-B)
    f. The Board supported the conceptual landscape plan and the intent to create a lushly planted transition at the building edge. (CS1-C, PL3-B)

4. **Access and Services.** The Board discussed concerns with the proposed street access, compared with possible alley access. The Board recognized that the steeply sloping site creates challenges for internal ramping, and they were satisfied with the preferred access point.
    a. The parking entry should be designed to minimize visual and physical impacts to the pedestrian realm. (DC1-B, DC1-C)
    b. The Board discussed the proposed solid waste staging and collection at the alley, in relation to the secondary residential exits at the alley. The Board recommended that this area be designed to accommodate any solid waste staging, and coordinate with the needs of pedestrian access adjacent to the alley. (DC1-C.4)

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-1. Sun and Wind: Take advantage of solar exposure and natural ventilation. Use local wind patterns and solar gain to reduce the need for mechanical ventilation and heating where possible.

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.

CS1-B-3. Managing Solar Gain: Manage direct sunlight falling on south and west facing facades through shading devices and existing or newly planted trees.

CS1-C Topography

CS1-C-1. Land Form: Use natural topography and desirable landforms to inform project design.

CS1-C-2. Elevation Changes: Use the existing site topography when locating structures and open spaces on the 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-2. Existing Site Features: Use changes in topography, site shape, and vegetation or structures to help make a successful fit with adjacent properties.

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.

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

CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes

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.

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.

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-3. Individual Entries: Ground-related housing should be scaled and detailed appropriately to provide for a more intimate type of entry.

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.

DESIGN CONCEPT

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

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

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 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-C Secondary Architectural Features

DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest: Add depth to facades 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-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.

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.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the following departures were requested:

1. **Structure Depth (SMC 23.45.528.B.1):** The Code requires a maximum structure depth that measures 75% of the lot depth. For this lot, a maximum 90' structure depth is allowed. The applicant proposes a 101'6" structure depth (84.6%), with additional modulation on street facing façades.

   The Board was not inclined to support the proposed departure as shown, since it was unclear how the additional structure depth provides a design that better meets the intent of the Design Review Guidelines. The Board offered potential support for this departure if the additional structure depth allows for further modulation of the north and east facades and the townhouse type units step with grade, beyond what was shown at the EDG meeting.

2. **Garage Doors (SMC 23.45.536.D.3.a):** The Code requires garage doors be no more than 75 square feet in size. The applicant proposes 180 square foot garage doors that are recessed 9'8" into the structure, with access from 11th Ave.

   Since the garage door is at the sidewalk and provides access for only 13 cars, the Board was not supportive of the departure as shown at the EDG meeting. The Board recognized that with large numbers of parking, the maximum door size could be a challenge, but with a small number of cars, a smaller garage door and a one-way driveway should be sufficient. The potential for the departure's impacts to the pedestrian environment are too great, and it was unclear how the proposed departure would better meet the intent of the Design Review Guidelines.

BOARD DIRECTION

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