



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE WEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3016985

Address: 1228 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.

Applicant: Bradley Khouri, b9 Architects, for Views at Queen Anne LLC

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, August 20, 2014

Board Members Present: Boyd Pickrell (Acting Chair)  
Christne Harrington  
Jull Kurfirst  
Janet Stephenson

Board Members Absent: Mindy Black

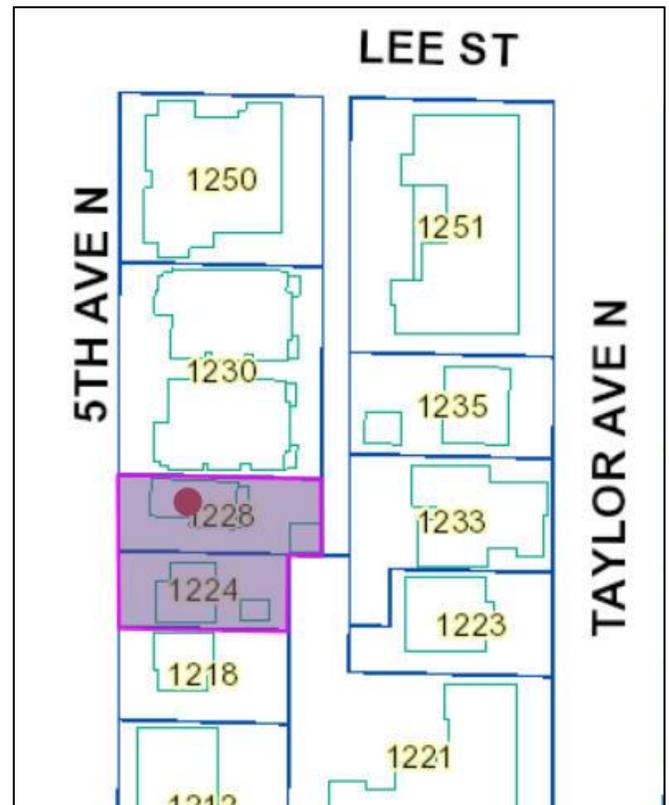
DPD Staff Present: Michael Dorcy (for Carly Guillory)

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: LR3

Nearby Zones: (North) LR3  
(South) LR3  
(East) LR3  
(West) LR3 & SF (Park)

Lot Area: 9,900 s.f.



**Current Development:**

1-1 ½ story single family residences

**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

A mixture of apartment buildings, condominiums, triplexes, duplex and single-family residences

**Access:**

An alley, connecting the northern portion of the proposal site to Lee Street bisects the northern half of the block running between 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue N. and Taylor Av. N.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:**

None

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The preferred option is for four structures around a central courtyard, containing 10 residential units in all.

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3016985) 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 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](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

**DESIGN DEVELOPMENT**

The applicant presented three schemes. The first showed two rows of 5 connected townhouses, rectangular in shape and their short sides running in a north/south direction aligned parallel to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue N. There was a central courtyard between the townhouse clusters. A second scheme proposed 10 townhouses in 3 structures. As in scheme #1, five of the townhouses were ganged parallel to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue N. at the western portion of the site with three of the townhouses similarly ganged behind and parallel to the front row. The townhouse located at the northeast corner, however, was pushed to the west with the townhouse that had been located to its south

turned, its short sides running in an east/west direction, creating three separate structures rather than two. This allowed the courtyard amenity area to expand and to occupy, basically, the portion of the site which in the first scheme had been occupied by the townhouse which had been rotated to occupy the northeast corner of the site.

The third and preferred scheme split the front row of townhouses into two structures, the northernmost containing two townhouses separated from the lower group of three by a relatively narrow passageway that led into a central courtyard. At the rear of the site three of the units were separated from the other two and arranged in a pinwheel fashion about the central courtyard. The pinwheel was made more evident in a gesture that pulled the townhouse in the southeast corner away from the neighbor adjacent to that corner to provide for better privacy, and access to light and air. This arrangement was thought to maximize the amount of internal open space and to provide a face to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue N. that was better scaled to the neighborhood and one that better engaged Bhy Kracke Park which lay directly across the street. The gesture required for this configuration, however, would require 4 departures from development standards, including two from required maximum façade lengths, one from minimal side setbacks at the northwest corner of the site, and one from minimum separation between the structures on site.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Public comment tended to be on environmental impacts rather than design issues. In relating to the siting of the buildings, and in response to departure requests affecting setbacks of the individual buildings, there were concerns expressed about privacy and designing windows with a respect for windows on neighboring structures, as well as impacts on sun light and air relative to siting choices. Regarding neighborhood character, one member of the public stated that the prevailing architectural style was “craftsman,” and that what the design team was presenting was not in step with that style.

## **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.

## **BOARD’S DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATIONS**

The Board’s initial discussion focused on the following elements of the design: 1.) Siting (in particular the “pinwheel” clustering of the buildings and units); 2.) The central courtyard, and effects on north and south adjacencies, with related departure requests; 3.) The relationship of the project to the park.

1. Siting: The Board generally responded favorably to the pin-wheel arrangement of units, to the concepts of a central courtyard serving all the units, and the open passageway that

linked the internal courtyard with 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue North and suggested a connection to Bhy Kracke Park across the street. The Board expressed approval of the way the development had pulled itself back from the southeast corner of the site to provide additional light and air and privacy to the neighbor to the south. It did not respond favorably to the proposed departure request that would allow the structure in the northwest quadrant of the site to be located closer to the north property line than the Code would allow.

2. **Court Yard Design:** At this juncture, the concept for the courtyard in the preferred scheme, while preferable to those in the other schemes due to its size, centrality and potential for relating to each of the individual units in enriching ways, is a bit nebulous. The nebulosity at this stage of design is understandable and should be regarded as an asset since it allows for a certain malleability and flexibility as the design is developed. Critical to the success of the overall design of the project is providing a courtyard that is serviceable and attractive. But neither the functionality or attractiveness or quantity of the proposed amenity area would justify the intrusion into a comfortably desired buffer zone between the project and the abutting neighbors. The Board was clear that they would not favor a departure allowing less than a Code-required north side setback. It was the Board's view that a commodious courtyard is compatible with adequate buffers for light, air, and privacy at the north and south boundary lines. The desirable accommodations to neighbors was possible through a combination of adjustments in the size and shape of units and to the proposed, amenity spaces.
3. **Relationship of proposal to Bhy Kracke Park:** The Board responded favorably to the pedestrian access to the common amenity area situated between the second and third townhouse units along 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue N. It appeared to be located in about the right position, would need care to assure that it had adequate daylight (and additional lighting for dark conditions. The narrowing of the throat of the passage at the stair would appear to work, but it was of particular importance to avoid the severity of blank walls along units two and three, and to provide landscaping and windows into the units to enliven the space. The pedestrian access at this point offered some, though limited, views across to the park, and provided, with other gestures, an opportunity to link the development more broadly and more meaningfully to the park across the street.

The granting of the departure requests for increased façade lengths along the north and southeast facades was not of particular concern for the Board, except for the north façade where, when combined with the departure request for a decreased width in the side setback, infringement on the north neighbors' air, light and privacy was thought by the Board to be excessive. Given a realignment of units to provide for an adequate setback at the northwest unit, the Board appeared inclined to look favorably on the departure for façade length along the north property line. Allowing for a separation between townhomes #2 and #3 of less than 10 feet, which would also require a departure, could be approved by the Board, provided the considerations mentioned under Courtyard Design (#2 above)—for light, for some fenestration, for mitigation compensating for the blank walls and generating a positive pedestrian experience -- was convincingly demonstrated.

Regarding the requested departure for the porch that would serve townhouse units #1 and #2, which would be located only three feet from the west property line,, the Board indicated that

they were favorable to the departure, provided the porch appeared permanent and of high quality and sound structural design, integrated with robust landscaping.

The Board was not convinced of a prevailing “Craftsman character” in the neighborhood as had been suggested by a member of the public attending the meeting, and indicated that the massing proposed on site, with some adjustments, as well as the contemporary architectural expression suggested in the drawings were appropriate in scale, form and style in the immediate neighborhood. The buildings should be modern and sleek and constructed of high quality materials. The roof, since it would be viewed from the high elevation at the opposite end of the park, should be composed in such a way that it acknowledged some relationship to the park.

The Board reacted favorably to the variation in parapet heights of the units suggested in some of the drawings and directed that the design team should explore a stepping-down of the floors in the units as they progressed from north to south.

## **KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

Emanating from the discussion , the following key considerations emerged as the consensus guidance of the Board:

1. An ample courtyard amenity space, together with adequate and Code compliant peripheral setbacks from property lines and neighboring structures should be able to be achieved through the manipulation of the sizes, shapes, and positioning of the individual townhouse units.
2. The Board would be most reluctant to recommend granting a departure for reducing the Code-compliant setback at the northwest portion of the development site.
3. The requested departures for exceeding façade length along the north property line and the lower portion of the east property line seemed reasonable requests, given the design intent, provided that the design team supply the Board with detailed studies of favorable relationships to assure for privacy and comfort to openings on the adjacent buildings located to the north and the south of the proposed development.
4. The departure for requiring less than a ten foot separation between townhouse #2 and #3 to provide for a passage between the sidewalk and courtyard would be entertained, as long as the design team could convincingly demonstrate that the passageway would offer a felicitous experience to both tenants and visitors traversing the space.
5. The character and attractiveness of the interior courtyard space needed to be demonstrated in convincing detail.
6. The modulation suggested at the parapet level, differentiating individual townhouse units, was considered a positive feature in the early design, but the Board would like to see a further investigation of what might be the benefits of stepping down the ground floor plates of the individual units in response to the change in topography as

the site stepped down from north to south, providing for even greater unit differentiation.

7. The requested departure which would be required to allow the porch shared by units #1 and #2 to be situated less than required from the front property line was looked upon favorably by members of the Board, but the Board would like to see the stair and porch in more detail and would like to see a design that clearly integrated porch and entries into the architectural language of the buildings and into a robust landscaping plan for the entire 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue N. frontage.
8. Finally, the design team was challenged by the Board, without further specific details, to make a more deliberate and conscious effort to relate the proposal, both architecturally and in its landscaping programming, to the presence of the park directly across the street.

## DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines identified by the Board as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. 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-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.

#### **CS1-D Plants and Habitat**

**CS1-D-1. On-Site Features:** Incorporate on-site natural habitats and landscape elements into project design and connect those features to existing networks of open spaces and natural habitats wherever possible. Consider relocating significant trees and vegetation if retention is not feasible.

**CS1-D-2. Off-Site Features:** Provide opportunities through design to connect to off-site habitats such as riparian corridors or existing urban forest corridors. Promote continuous habitat, where possible, and increase interconnected corridors of urban forest and habitat where possible.

**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-A Location in the City and Neighborhood**

**CS2-A-1. Sense of Place:** Emphasize attributes that give a distinctive sense of place. Design the building and open spaces to enhance areas where a strong identity already exists, and create a sense of place where the physical context is less established.

**CS2-A-2. Architectural Presence:** Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly.

**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-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.

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

**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-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-1. Fitting Old and New Together:** Create compatibility between new projects, and existing architectural context, including historic and modern designs, through building articulation, scale and proportion, roof forms, detailing, fenestration, and/or the use of complementary materials.

**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.

**PUBLIC LIFE**

**PL1 Connectivity: Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.**

## **PL1-A Network of Open Spaces**

**PL1-A-1. Enhancing Open Space:** Design the building and open spaces to positively contribute to a broader network of open spaces throughout the neighborhood.

## **PL1-B Walkways and Connections**

**PL1-B-1. Pedestrian Infrastructure:** Connect on-site pedestrian walkways with existing public and private pedestrian infrastructure, thereby supporting pedestrian connections within and outside the project.

**PL1-B-3. Pedestrian Amenities:** Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian oriented open spaces to enliven the area and attract interest and interaction with the site and building should be considered.

## **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.

### **PL2-D Wayfinding**

**PL2-D-1. Design as Wayfinding:** Use design features as a means of wayfinding wherever possible.

## **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-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-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.

### **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-C-3. Fit With Neighboring Buildings:** Use design elements to achieve a successful fit between a building and its neighbors.

#### **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.

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

#### **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-2. Matching Uses to Conditions:** Respond to changing environmental conditions such as seasonal and daily light and weather shifts through open space design and/or programming of open space activities.

**DC3-B-3. Connections to Other Open Space:** Site and design project-related open spaces to connect with, or enhance, the uses and activities of other nearby public open space where appropriate.

**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-1. Reinforce Existing Open Space:** Where a strong open space concept exists in the neighborhood, reinforce existing character and patterns of street tree planting, buffers or treatment of topographic changes. Where no strong patterns exist, initiate a strong open space concept that other projects can build upon in the future.

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

**DC3-C-3. Support Natural Areas:** Create an open space design that retains and enhances onsite natural areas and connects to natural areas that may exist off-site and may provide habitat for wildlife.

## **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.

### **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

During the Early Design Guidance meeting the following departures were requested:

1. North façade length: maximum allowed is 65% of lot depth; requesting 70.7 % (SMC 23.45.527.B).
2. SE façade length: maximum allowed is 65% of lot depth; requesting 83% (SMC 23.45.527.B).
3. Side setback, north: required, 5-foot minimum, 7-foot average; 3-feet for a distance of 21 feet (SMC 23.45.518.A).
4. Separation between structures: required, 10 feet; distance between townhouse 2 and townhouse 3 varies between 5 and 7 feet (SMC23.45.518.F).
5. Front setback: 4 feet for stair with maximum height of 4 feet for porch; requested, 3 feet for stair to porch serving townhouses #1 and #2 (SMC 23.45.518.H.5.a; departure not listed on pp.30 or 39 of EDG packet).

The Board indicated a strong reluctance to grant the third departure request. (See discussion on p. 4, above.)

### **BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application with a design responsive to the specified guidelines and to the guidance given by the Board.