City of Seattle

Department of Construction and Inspections
Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN REVIEW

FIRST RECOMMENDATION OF THE SOUTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

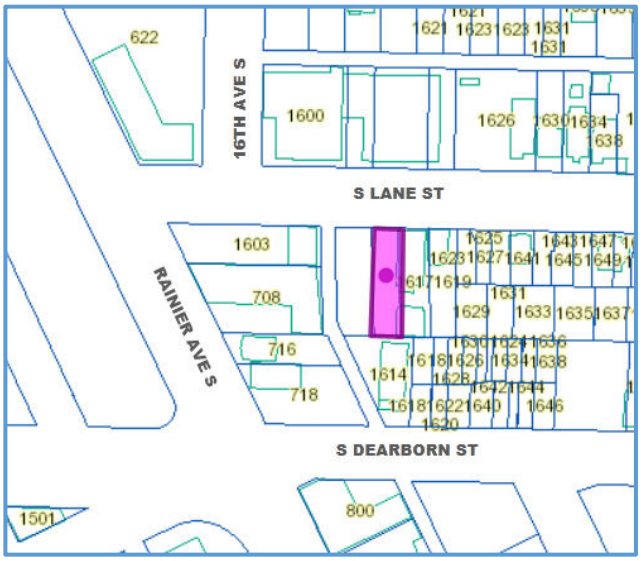
Project Number:	3017455
Address:	1617 South Lane Street
Applicant:	Mark Travers, Mark Travers Architects
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday, August 23, 2016
Board Members Present:	Julian Weber, Chair David Sauvion Carey Dagliano Holmes Charles Romero
Board Members Absent:	Sharon Khosla
DPD Staff Present:	Holly J. Godard

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Lowrise 3 (LR3)

Nearby Zones: (North) Neighborhood Commercial 2 with 40 foot height limit (NC2-40)
(South) Lowrise 3 (LR3)
(East) Lowrise 3 (LR3)
(West) Lowrise 3 (LR3)

Lot Area: 3,600 square feet



Current Development:

The site is a vacant lot.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

Surrounding development is residential apartments and townhouses with a single family home neighborhood to the east. There is a human services use across South Lane Street to the north.

Access:

Access to the site is via South Lane Street.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

There is a steep slope Environmentally Critical Area (ECA) at the south end of the site.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes to build 14 apartments on this 3,600 square foot site.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

At the first EDG meeting the architect briefly presented the site context, opportunities and constraints. Three massing options were presented to the Board for comment. All three proposed apartment flats and no vehicle parking on site. Pedestrian access will be via South Lane Street. The site is 30 feet wide and about 115 feet long. All options stay north of the steep slope area. Option 1 is a two building configuration with stacked apartments, outdoor stairs and at grade open space. Option 2 is a one building proposal with two open stairways midway through the building. Open space amenities are at grade. Option 3 is a one building massing alternative with stairways located at the end of the building. All building massing alternatives are flat roofed with four stories of apartment flats. The property owner owns the neighboring development to the east. The board asked clarifying questions about the neighborhood context, location of the open space, location of the trash and bicycle parking, the nature of the stair as open or enclosed.

At the second Early Design Guidance (EDG) meeting the project proponents presented two design options based on input from the first EDG meeting.

Option 1 is a two building option with a courtyard between the two buildings. The front façade is somewhat articulated; the front building steps from a two story structure to a four story structure at the front of the narrow lot and the other four story structure behind. The stairwells are exterior. There are small bay windows on the east and west facades. Departures are contemplated for rear and side yard setbacks.

Option 2 is a one building option with a common courtyard at the rear of the site. The building has two interior stairs and individual unit decks on the east and west façade.

The applicant presented the design updates at the First Recommendation meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment from the first EDG meeting included the following:

- Add vehicle parking to the development.
- Conduct SEPA review on the project.
- Describe the build green specifics.
- Point out the amenity space location and design.
- Create a friendly front façade and landscape treatment on Lane Street.
- Locate the trash in a convenient and reasonable location.
- Option one has a desirable location for the open space courtyard which relates to the open space of the neighboring development.

Public comment from the second EDG meeting included the following:

- Use quality construction practices for a lasting design project.
- Use quality materials to set and continue a pattern for the neighborhood.

Public comment from the third EDG meeting included the following:

- Omit the tall fence at the front unit and use a smaller fence and landscaping to achieve a sense of privacy.

No members of the public were present at the First Recommendation meeting and no written design comments were received.

The design packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3017455) 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 SDCI:

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

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

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 favored further exploration of Option 1.

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-A Energy Use

CS1-A-1. Energy Choices: At the earliest phase of project development, examine how energy choices may influence building form, siting, and orientation, and factor in the findings when making siting and design decisions.

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.

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-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.

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

CS2-B-3. Character of Open Space: Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces.

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-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.

At the first Early Design Guidance (EDG)meeting the Board stressed the design should create units which capture natural light and air. Avoid units with small windows and units configured to always be in the shade. Consider using the sloping area to step the building down in interesting forms. Or use the elevation change creatively for enhanced amenity space and borrowed landscape and views to the south. Create opportunities to enjoy the view and to capture light and air from units, decks on units and patios. The Board directed the applicant to present a more thorough description of the neighborhood at the next presentation, include descriptions of items above to better acquaint the board with a sense of place. Continue design development of option #1. Consider the block face and roof forms on the block face, as well as options for a better street and façade relationship. Create genuinely different options to replace option #2 and #3 presented at this meeting. Consider different building forms, unit types, circulation alternatives, amenity location alternatives. Include purposeful architectural (and landscape architectural) forms to create an authentic and deliberate rapport between the building and South Lane Street. Ideas might include sidewalks, stoops, large windows, bay windows, patios and mailbox areas. Create a continuum of private to semi-private to semi-public, to public spaces from the building façade to the street.

At the second EDG meeting the Board pointed out the oversized bulk of the building at the south property line. The applicant will conduct a zoning check to see what is allowable at that location. The Board directed the applicant to reduce the bulk at that location. The Board is interested to see natural light and air access for all building units. the Board identified the neighborhood attributes of eyes on the street, porches, windows, stoops and stairs as positive elements for this project to explore in the updated design idiom. At the second EDG meeting the Board directed the applicant to provide evidence of the desirable block face building elements which should inform the front façade of this building. The two story element is a good beginning, but the blank wall which meets the ground and the large window above should be transformed into a residential expression with a primary or secondary door, semi-private and private open space and some semitransparent landscaping between the building and the sidewalk. Visual and actual connection (if determined a positive element) to the street should be carefully conceived and presented at the next meeting. The Board directed the applicant to design to a concept that will help reduce the height, bulk and scale of the building. The Board was favorable toward the open space that connects with the neighboring open space.

At the conclusion of the Second EDG meeting, the Board recommended that the project proponents return with a third EDG package showing the following specific topics:

- Create full site sections to show how the grade is resolved with the building forms,

- show property lines in the drawings,
- conduct preliminary zoning to discard any unworkable proposals and
- show clear detail on how the site circulation will work.

The Board reiterated their expectations to see neighborhood context analyzed and reflected in the proposal. Lastly, the Board expressed their desire to understand how site circulation works with entries, open spaces and the sidewalk relationship. The Board noted that this tight site is a design challenge and hopes to see many design issues resolved so the MUP submittal stages may progress smoothly. The Board was appreciative of the evolving design efforts.

At the third EDG meeting the Board felt that applicant responded to most of the guidance, but wanted to see more evidence of scale-giving elements along the front façade to blend with the streetscape. Additional details will be necessary to see how the front yard of the street unit relates to the sidewalk. (Planner note: The applicant was allowed to apply for the MUP at this stage.)

At the First Recommendation meeting the Board directed the applicant to simplify the building compositions for a more unified look. (CS2d) The Board also directed the applicant to further clarify the front unit landscaping for light screening of the front window. The applicant will need to research building code standards to determine if roof top access is allowed as shown. The Board determined that the façade compositions were presenting too many design articulations and has become over burdened with a variety of modulation, material, color and texture. They directed the applicant to simplify the design.

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-A-2. Adding to Public Life: Seek opportunities to foster human interaction through an increase in the size and quality of project-related open space available for public life.

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-2. Pedestrian Volumes: Provide ample space for pedestrian flow and circulation, particularly in areas where there is already heavy pedestrian traffic or where the project is expected to add or attract pedestrians to the area.

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.

PL1-C Outdoor Uses and Activities

PL1-C-1. Selecting Activity Areas: Concentrate activity areas in places with sunny exposure, views across spaces, and in direct line with pedestrian routes.

PL1-C-2. Informal Community Uses: In addition to places for walking and sitting, consider including space for informal community use such as performances, farmer's markets, kiosks and community bulletin boards, cafes, or street vending.

PL1-C-3. Year-Round Activity: Where possible, include features in open spaces for activities beyond daylight hours and throughout the seasons of the year, especially in neighborhood centers where active open space will contribute vibrancy, economic health, and public safety.

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-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.

At the first EDG meeting the Board directed the applicant to use the guidance above as a checklist to enhance and develop alternatives for the next EDG meeting. Create easy and interesting access. Design a sense of safety and security into the project design by exploring components like grade changes, transparent screening, fencing at appropriate levels and places and landscaping. Strive to achieve a security function without presenting a harsh face to the neighborhood or residents. The Board directed the applicant to create welcoming and textural open spaces that capture sunlight and air. Create spaces for residents to interact. Identify useable and protected bicycle parking and storage. Consider linking the open space with the steep slope area and create areas to enjoy the views to the south. Consider open space needs for individuals, families and children.

At the second EDG meeting the Board recommended that the project proponents return for another EDG meeting to provide additional information on the design development and to respond to the guidance provided above.

At the third EDG meeting, the Board felt that they did not have enough information regarding the site and entry details and that the entry sequencing was not fully resolved. The Board recommended that the project proponents return for a fourth EDG meeting with detailed information on the site entry and gate design, building entries that are recognizable and welcoming, front unit garden and privacy screening without a tall fence. (Planner note: The applicant was allowed to apply for the MUP at this stage.)

At the First Recommendation meeting the Board determined that additional design refinements were needed. The applicant was directed to simplify the front fencing to find one unifying design rather than the three styles of fencing presented for better expressed public realm interface and wayfinding. (PL3A4) Additionally, they directed the applicant to widen the front unit stoop to 5 feet. The Board gave additional direction:

- Bring a material board at the next meeting.
- Confirm the amenity areas with a zoning check.
- Refine plan drawings and conduct a thorough quality control to see that all documents are updated and are in agreement, i.e. no old versions are included.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

At the time of the FIRST Early Design Guidance no departures were requested. The Board indicated that they are willing to consider design departures that may help the project better meet design guidance. The Board suggested that the applicant consider setback departures from the rear and west side setbacks to give a little more room for amenity areas and locating service functions and circulation on the site or other departure options.

At the time of the FIRST Recommendation the following departures were requested:

1. **Side setbacks (SMC 23.45.518):** The Code requires 7 feet average and 5 feet minimum building setback from the property line. The applicant proposes 5 feet average and 5 feet minimum to better meet site conditions at the west property line. (DC2-A, B, CS2-B).

The Board indicated that they are favorable and willing to contemplate side setback departures with more information.

2. **Rear Setback (SMC 23.45.518):** The Code requires 15 feet setback on a lot with no alley. The applicant proposes 7.5 rear setback. (DC2-A, B, CS2-B, C).

The Board indicated that they are favorable and willing to contemplate a rear setback departure with more information.

BOARD DIRECTION

The Board directed the applicant to return for a Second Recommendation meeting.