

Current Development: The subject site is located on the southwest corner of E John Street and 12th Avenue E. The site consists of three lots, containing existing multifamily structures and an office commercial use. The site contains a steady slope from the northeast corner intersection to the southwest corner. In total the grade change is approximately 8 feet across the site. The site contains some mature trees and vegetation. 12th Avenue E is designated as a minor arterial street. The site is also located within the Capitol Hill Urban Center designation.

Access: Vehicular and pedestrian access is available from E John Street and 12th Avenue E.

Surrounding Development: The neighborhood is characterized by small single family homes, low- and mid-rise apartment and condominium buildings, most of which date from the early to mid-twentieth century. Older buildings on 12th Avenue are typically 3-4 story brick structures, while later buildings tend to be wood frame or concrete structures, ranging from 3-4 stories. Recent developments are typically wood frame buildings, 3-4 stories in height. Most of these buildings occupy only one or two parcels, creating a fairly consistent scale of development throughout the neighborhood. Many of the existing buildings are set back from the street and from adjacent property lines, while others, particularly larger buildings, are built out to their property lines. Brick is the most common cladding material, particularly in older buildings, while later buildings are clad in a variety of materials including wood, brick and concrete masonry.

Neighborhood Character: The area is well served by transit and is beginning to be developed with higher density multi-family residential structures. A light rail station, to open in early 2016, is located two blocks from the subject lot.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Early Design Guidance for a four story, 50-unit residential structure. No parking is provided. The existing structures will be demolished.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: August 13, 2014

PUBLIC COMMENT

Multiple members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Noted that there is an exceptional amount of water under the site and warned that basement units would likely flood.
- Would like to see a larger setback provided to the south. Expressed concern about increased mold growth in small setbacks between buildings.

- Preferred current location for solid waste and recycling storage near the corner versus an alternative location to the south.
- Preferred Massing Alternative Two that breaks the building into two separate masses.
- Expressed concern for potential noise, privacy and light and glare impacts from the courtyard toward adjacent residential structures.
- Building should provide a sensitive transition from the adjacent single family homes.
- Would like to see more articulation and transparency in the massing, particularly along the long 12th Avenue E façade.
- Noted courtyard is critical to the design. Felt courtyard should be large enough to provide large scale greenery.
- Concerned regarding loss of substantial existing tree canopy.
- More space should be provided for the solid waste and recycling storage spaces.
- Materials should reference the existing historic Capitol Hill neighborhood context, including wood and brick.
- Concerned building will create an urban canyon.
- Expressed concern that the rooftop terrace will create the appearance of a fifth story given the additional massing created by the stair and elevator overrun.
- The design option pushes massing out toward all the adjacent properties; would like to see an additional setback to the south.

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: August 13, 2014

1. **Massing and Building Location.** The Board was particularly concerned with the lack of variation in the three design options. After considerable discussion, four of the six Design Review Board members gave guidance to develop massing alternative three and proceed to MUP application. The Board felt the preferred massing alternative three provided a better design response to context by locating courtyard as a centerpiece of the design. The Board noted that significant efforts will be necessary to resolve street façade articulation and massing.
 - a) The Board directed the applicant to use modulation and articulation at the 12th Avenue E facade to reduce the perceived façade length and create a more pleasing proportion to the overall building (CS2-C2).
 - b) The Board reviewed cumulative setback provided along the south property line, which measured between 14-16 feet, and recommended that it was sufficient (CS2-D5).
 - c) The Board noted the facades facing adjacent residential structures should be designed to minimize disrupting the privacy of residents in adjacent buildings (CS2-D5).

2. **Corner Treatment.** The Board directed that the prominent location on the corner of two major streets necessitated an architectural response at the corner.
 - a) The Board felt that the treatment and articulation of the corner should inform the overall façade articulation and proportion on 12th Avenue E (CS2-C1).
 - b) The Board was particularly concerned about the location of the electrical vault and solid waste storage space along the narrow E John Street facade. The Board directed the applicant to work with Seattle Public Utilities and Seattle City Light to identify an appropriate location for services. The location should be chosen to be sensitive to adjacent sites (DC1-C2 and C4).
 - c) Once a location is determined for solid waste, the street level façade must be designed along the sidewalk to minimize visual and odor impacts (DC1-C2 and C4).

3. **Courtyard.** The Board stated that the provided courtyard was consistent with the Capitol Hill vernacular. The Board noted that Design Alternative three provided the best design response to the context by minimizing impacts to adjacent residential structures.
 - d) The Board directed that the courtyard space be expressed visibly along the street façade. At the Recommendation Meeting the applicant should demonstrate how the courtyard is read from the adjacent 12th Avenue right-of-way (DC3-iii, CS2-B2).
 - e) The bicycle entry and storage space should be resolved within the overall flow of the building (PL4-B2).
 - f) The Board expressed concern about the viability and privacy of below grade units facing the street and the common entrance walkway. The Board directed the applicant to design these spaces with a comfortable transition between the unit and public area, incorporating design techniques used in Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (PL3-B).
 - g) The landscape plan should maximize tree canopy with the courtyard and setback spaces (DC3-iii).

4. **Materials**
 - a) The Board encouraged use of durable, quality materials, respectful of the existing materiality context of the established Capitol Hill neighborhood (CS3-A1 and A4, CS3-I-iv, DC4-II).

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](#).

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.

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-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-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-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.

CS2-III Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility

CS2-III-i. Building Mass: Break up building mass by incorporating different façade treatments to give the impression of multiple, small-scale buildings, in keeping with the established development pattern.

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-3. Established Neighborhoods: In existing neighborhoods with a well-defined architectural character, site and design new structures to complement or be compatible with the architectural style and siting patterns of neighborhood buildings.

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.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

CS3-I Architectural Concept and Consistency

CS3-I-iv. Materials: Use materials and design that are compatible with the structures in the vicinity if those represent the neighborhood character.

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.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

PL2-I Human Scale

PL2-I-i. Building Entries: Incorporate building entry treatments that are arched or framed in a manner that welcomes people and protects them from the elements and emphasizes the building's architecture.

PL2-I-ii. Pedestrian Character: Improve and support pedestrian-orientation by using components such as: non-reflective storefront windows and transoms; pedestrian scaled awnings; architectural detailing on the first floor; and detailing at the roof line.

PL2-II Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances

PL2-II-i. Entryways: Provide entryways that link the building to the surrounding landscape.

PL2-II-ii. Link Open Spaces: Create open spaces at street level that link to the open space of the sidewalk.

PL2-II-iv. Residential Entrances: Minimize the number of residential entrances on commercial streets where non-residential uses are required. Where unavoidable, minimize their impact to the vitality of the retail commercial streetscape.

PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.

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-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.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

DC1-II Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas

DC1-II-i. Dumpsters: Consolidate and screen dumpsters to preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment.

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-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-2. Dual Purpose Elements: Consider architectural features that can be dual purpose— adding depth, texture, and scale as well as serving other project functions.

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.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

DC3-I Residential Open Space

DC3-I-ii. Courtyards: Create substantial courtyard-style open space that is visually accessible to the public view.

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-C Lighting

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.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

DC4-I Height, Bulk, and Scale

DC4-I-i. Materials: Masonry and terra cotta are preferred building materials, although other materials may be used in ways that are compatible with these more traditional materials. The Broadway Market is an example of a development that blends well with its surroundings and includes a mixture of materials, including masonry.

DC4-II Exterior Finish Materials

DC4-II-i. 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.

1. Use wood shingles or board and batten siding on residential structures.
2. Avoid wood or metal siding materials on commercial structures.
3. Provide operable windows, especially on storefronts.
4. Use materials that are consistent with the existing or intended neighborhood character, including brick, cast stone, architectural stone, terracotta details, and concrete that incorporates texture and color.
5. Consider each building as a high-quality, long-term addition to the neighborhood; exterior design and materials should exhibit permanence and quality appropriate to the Capitol Hill neighborhood.
6. The use of applied foam ornamentation and EIFS (Exterior Insulation & Finish System) is discouraged, especially on ground level locations.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

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

1. **Façade Length (SMC 23.45.527 B1):** The Code requires a maximum façade length of 65% of the lot depth. The applicant proposes a maximum façade length of 74%.

The Board indicated early support for the requested departure. The Board noted that maximum façade length is very often hard to achieve on irregularly shaped lots. The Board felt the overall massing concept was sufficient to reduce the perceived bulk of structure on the side property lines consistent with Design Review Guideline CS2-D Height, Bulk and Scale.

2. **Projections into the Front and Street Side Setbacks (SMC 23.45.518 I):** The Code requires decks and balconies may project 4 feet into each setback it is also no closer than 5 feet to a project line. The applicant 2 foot deck and balcony projections into the street front and side setback so that the decks are no closer than 3 feet to the side property line.

The Board indicated early support for the proposed departure request. The Board felt the deck projections may be used to provide the requested façade articulation and modulation

along the 12th Avenue E street façade and also help articulate the corner consistent with Design Review Guideline CS2-C Relationship to Block.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application.