



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE SOUTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3018098

Address: 3309 Beacon Avenue South

Applicant: Lora Hammersmith of Studio 19 Architects

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, October 21, 2014

Board Members Present: Stephen Yamada-Heidner (chair)
Amoreena Miller
David Sauvion
Julian Weber

Board Members Absent: Drew Hicks

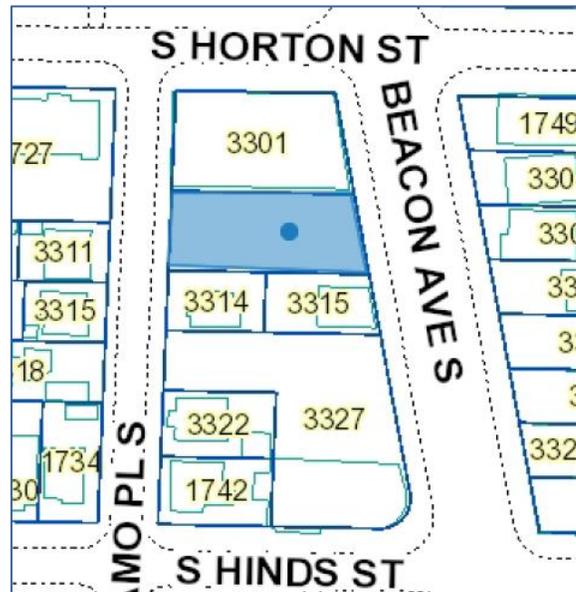
DPD Staff Present: Carly Guillory

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial (NC1-40)

Nearby Zones: (North) NC1-40
(South) NC1-40
(East) NC1-40
(West) Single Family (SF 5000)

Lot Area: 6,766 square feet



Current Development:

The subject site is currently vacant, and is used as a surface parking lot.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

Surrounding development consists primarily of one and two-story structures. Commercial and multi-family uses can be found along Beacon Avenue South, while residential structures constitute a majority of the development to the west and east of the Beacon Avenue South corridor.

Access:

Current and proposed vehicular access to the site is via Alamo Place South. Proposed pedestrian access to the residential lobby and retail space is via Beacon Avenue South.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

None.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The preferred proposal is a four-story mixed use structure containing 1,200 square feet of retail space, 18 residential units, a central landscaped courtyard, and parking for 12 vehicles.

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The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3018098) 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 four design concepts. All schemes propose a structure containing 18 residential units above retail and a residential lobby along Beacon Avenue South. Vehicular access to the nine on-site parking stalls is via Alamo Place South.

Option 1 proposed development abutting the north and south property lines, with a slight modulation to accommodate the existing tree to the south. The surface parking lot was partially covered by floors two through four. Parking abutted the north, west, and south property lines, and was screened by fencing. Three departures are required by this option, and are related to blank facades, transparency, and location of parking.

The second option extended floors two through four further west to cover a majority of the at grade parking. Further modulation was proposed at the center of the site, along the north and south property lines, to provide for additional landscaping. Parking was again screened on the north, west, and south property lines by fencing. Three departures are requested with this option, and relate to blank facades, transparency, and location of parking.

Option 3 was referred to as the code compliant option. This option included commercial use along both street frontages. Vehicular access was proposed via Alamo Place South, and bisected the retail space into two 650 square foot spaces. Floors two through four were open to below, creating the appearance of a north and south mass. Parking was internal to the site, and screened at the south by fencing.

Option 4 was the preferred option, and developed a central courtyard element. The structure mass was again separated into two forms, and the central courtyard served to better accommodate the adjacent tree to the south. Two departure requests are included with this proposal, and relate to transparency and location of parking.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following comments were expressed at the Early Design Guidance meeting:

- Described the scale of existing adjacent development, noting that surrounding lots and structures are of relatively small scale.
- Supported commercial uses along Beacon Avenue South.
- Supported commercial uses along both Beacon Avenue South and Alamo Place South.
- Supported screened parking along Alamo Place 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.

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1. **Street-Level Interaction:** The Board agreed that Beacon Avenue South and Alamo Place South provide an opportunity to design a structure that enhances the street-level pedestrian experience. In order to best respond to this opportunity, the Board recommended a strong street edge along both street frontages.
 - a. The Board did not support parking along Alamo Place South, rather support was expressed for the conceptual design of the intervening uses along Alamo Place South, as shown in Option 3 (CS2-B, PL3, DC1-A, DC1-B, DC1-C).
 - b. The Board recommended including an intervening use between the parking and Alamo Place South. The Board suggested uses such as live-work units, and/or the residential lobby, agreeing that retail may be difficult to sustain. (CS2-B, CS2-C, PL3, DC1-A, DC3-B, DC3-C, DC3-D)
 - c. In order to accommodate an intervening use between the parking and Alamo Place South, the Board noted their support for departures related to non-residential street-level development standards (CS2-B, DC1-B, DC1-C).
 - d. The Board supported the strong street edge along Beacon Avenue South, and encouraged the use of high quality materials. A materials board shall be presented at the Recommendation meeting. (PL3, DC1-A, DC2-B, DC2-C, DC2-E, DC3-A, DC4-A)

2. **Massing:** The Board agreed that uses between the parking and Alamo Place South are desirable, and discussed the importance of designing this façade to best respond to the scale of existing development.
 - a. The Board recommended modulating the third and fourth floors to the east, while keeping a strong street edge at the first and second floors (CS2-B, DC2-A, DC2-D).
 - b. Adjacent development was discussed, and the Board agreed that modulation of the structure along the west property line was more desirable than modulation along the north and/or south property lines (CS2-B, CS2-C, CS2-D, DC2-A).

3. **Courtyard and Open Space:** The Board supported the courtyard in Option 4, and agreed that it could serve purpose for both the residents and the commercial spaces.
 - a. The Board acknowledged that it may be difficult to provide both the courtyard and an intervening use along Alamo Place South. To accommodate both, the Board noted support for departure requests to other development standards such as non-residential street-level requirements. (PL3, DC1-A, DC1-B, DC2-A, DC3-B, DC3-C, DC4-D)
 - b. The Board encouraged further development of the courtyard, designing it to be a useable space for both residents and commercial users (PL3, DC1-A, DC1-B, DC2-A, DC3-B, DC3-C, DC4-D).
 - c. The Board encouraged removing the vehicular parking space from the courtyard and reducing the size of the trash area (CS2-C, DC1-A, DC3).
 - d. Access to the courtyard from the residential lobby and commercial space on Beacon Avenue South was encouraged (CS2-C, DC1-A, DC3).

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

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-C-3. Full Block Sites: Break up long facades of full-block buildings to avoid a monolithic presence. Provide detail and human scale at street-level, and include repeating elements to add variety and rhythm to the façade and overall building design.

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-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.

PUBLIC LIFE

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.

PL3-B-3. Buildings with Live/Work Uses: Maintain active and transparent facades in the design of live/work residences. Design the first floor so it can be adapted to other commercial use as needed in the future.

PL3-B-4. Interaction: Provide opportunities for interaction among residents and neighbors.

PL3-C Retail Edges

PL3-C-1. Porous Edge: Engage passersby with opportunities to interact visually with the building interior using glazing and transparency. Create multiple entries where possible and make a physical and visual connection between people on the sidewalk and retail activities in the building.

PL3-C-2. Visibility: Maximize visibility into the building interior and merchandise displays. Consider fully operational glazed wall-sized doors that can be completely opened to the street, increased height in lobbies, and/or special lighting for displays.

PL3-C-3. Ancillary Activities: Allow space for activities such as sidewalk vending, seating, and restaurant dining to occur. Consider setting structures back from the street or incorporating space in the project design into which retail uses can extend.

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-3. Flexibility: Build in flexibility so the building can adapt over time to evolving needs, such as the ability to change residential space to commercial space as needed.

DC1-A-4. Views and Connections: Locate interior uses and activities to take advantage of views and physical connections to exterior spaces and uses.

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-B-2. Facilities for Alternative Transportation: Locate facilities for alternative transportation in prominent locations that are convenient and readily accessible to expected users.

DC1-C Parking and Service Uses

DC1-C-1. Below-Grade Parking: Locate parking below grade wherever possible. Where a surface parking lot is the only alternative, locate the parking in rear or side yards, or on lower or less visible portions of the site.

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-3. Multiple Uses: Design parking areas to serve multiple uses such as children’s play space, outdoor gathering areas, sports courts, woonerf, or common space in multifamily projects.

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 Façade Composition

DC2-B-1. Façade Composition: Design all building façades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all façades 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 façades 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 façades 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 façades, 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.

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 Open Space Uses and Activities

DC3-B-1. Meeting User Needs: Plan the size, uses, activities, and features of each open space to meet the needs of expected users, ensuring each space has a purpose and function.

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-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.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based on the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guidelines priorities and achieve a better overall project design than could be achieved without the departure(s). The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

1. **Transparency (SMC 23.47A.008.B.2.):** The Code requires 60% of the street-facing façade between two and eight feet above the sidewalk to be transparent. The applicant proposes a reduction of this requirement to zero as no façade is proposed along Alamo Place South.

The Board indicated support for a departure to transparency in order to accommodate uses along the Alamo Place South frontage; however, the departure as proposed was not supported. Rather, the Board found that a use should be located between the parking and Alamo Place South. (CS2-B, CS2-C, CS3-A, PL3-C, DC1-B, DC1-C)

2. **Location of Parking (SMC 23.47A.032.B.):** The Code requires parking within a structure to be separated from the street-level street-facing façade by another permitted use. The applicant proposes no intervening use along Alamo Place South.

The Board indicated they did not support this departure. Rather, the Board found that the Alamo Place South frontage ought to be activated by the presence of uses and a strong street edge. (CS2-B, CS2-C, CS3-A, PL3-C, DC1-B, DC1-C)

BOARD DIRECTION

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