



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE SOUTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3018185

Address: 1808 12th Ave S

Applicant: Jerome Diepenbrock

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

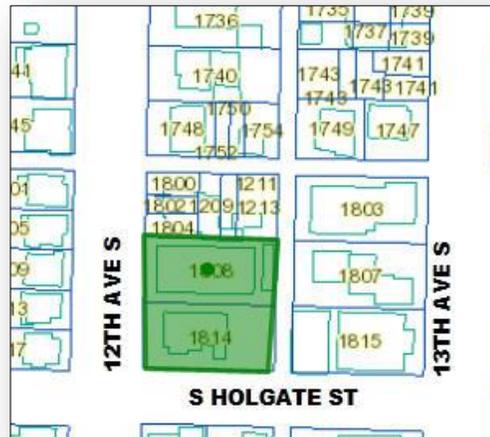
DPD Staff Present: Colin R. Vasquez, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Lowrise 3 (LR3)

Nearby Zones: (North) LR3
(South) LR3
(East) LR3
(West) LR3

Lot Area: 7,200 square feet



Current Development:

The site is a 7,200 sf lot (60' wide by 120' deep) with a 5-unit apartment building built in 1950. 12th Ave S is on the west side of the site and an alley is on the east side. It is the north half of the development site with S Holgate Street on the south side and S Grand Street on the north side. The lot slopes down approximately 20 feet from the alley to 12th Ave S.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

Adjacent to the Site

North; 3 story 2-3 unit townhouse buildings, 6 units total built in 2009.

Northwest; Gravel alley and Asphalt Parking for 4 story 10 unit apartment built in 1973.

East; Gravel alley, asphalt parking lot for 2 story, 4 unit apartment, built in 1953.

Southeast; 3 story 2-22 unit apartment buildings built in 1911.

South; 22 unit apartment building under construction

West; zoned LR-3 across 12th Ave S, with single family houses.

The site is located in a neighborhood that is cut off from through traffic on the west facing slope of Beacon Hill directly above a greenbelt which is adjacent to I-5.

The rest of the neighborhood is a mix of single family homes, low-rise apartments, and newer townhouse developments. The apartments in the 2 block radius span the decades from the middle of the 20th century with the exception of the adjacent apartment houses which were built in 1911. Newer development in the neighborhood has been predominantly townhouses built in the last 5 to 6 years including the two 3 story 3 unit buildings at 12th Ave S. and S. Grand St, adjacent to the site and on the northwest corner of the block, built in 2009.

The dominant features of the neighborhood are the steep slope of the streets and the location of Beacon Hill International Elementary School and playfield on the top of the hill. The slope is a block wide sloping down about 40 feet in height from 13th Ave S. to 12th Ave S. The elementary school and playfield extend 3 blocks long north to south and 1 block wide east to west. The playfield also serves the neighborhood as a park.

The street to the south S. Holgate Street has no through traffic having "T" intersections with 13th Ave S. and Beacon Hill Playfield on the east and 12th Ave S. on the west. 12th Ave S. is also not a through street and ends 2 blocks south of the site and only serves the local neighborhood beyond the site.

Access:

Current and proposed vehicular access to the site is via 12th Ave S. Proposed pedestrian access to the residential entrance is via 12th Ave S.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

None.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The preferred proposal is a five-story apartment building containing 22 to 26 residential units. Parking for 10 vehicles to be provided below grade. Existing structure to be demolished.

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The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3018185) 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 three design concepts. All schemes propose a residential structure containing a range of units from 22 to 26 and a residential lobby along 12th Ave S. Vehicular access to the ten on-site parking stalls is via 12th Ave S.

Option A — (preferred) 5-story, 26 units (14 on the street) balcony wraps courtyard

Option A is a C-shaped building with residential units facing 12th Ave S with direct access to the street, a common residential entry at the southwest corner of the building, a common amenity area in the southern central part of the site, and residential units that face the alley. Vehicle access would be from 12th Ave S. This configuration provides an arcade at ground level for a more active courtyard and mirrors the same function as the existing southern building while creating a north courtyard centered on the adjacent townhouse's private gardens.

Option B — 5-story, 26 units (14 on the street)

Option B is a C-shaped building with residential units facing 12th Ave S with direct access to the street, a common residential entry at the southwest corner of the building, a common amenity area in the southern central part of the site and north central part of the site, and residential units that face the alley. Vehicle access would be from 12th Ave S. This configuration differs from option A by creating a deeper (38' versus 32') north courtyard centered on the adjacent townhouse's private gardens. This option does not provide an arcade at ground level and creates a potential conflict between privacy of the middle unit and the public open space in the central courtyard.

Option C — 5-story, 22 units (11 on the street) balcony wraps courtyard

Option C is a C-shaped building with residential units facing 12th Ave S with direct access to the street, a common residential entry at the southwest corner of the building, a common amenity area in the southern central part of the site and north central part of the site, and residential units that face the alley. Vehicle access would be from 12th Ave S. This configuration includes an arcade at ground level a deeper (36' versus 31') private open space on the north side which reflects the use of the adjacent townhouse open space.

This option for the building shape does not maximize the number of units to western solar exposure and provides less opportunity for southern solar exposure to the middle unit.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

- Concerned that the new building will block sunlight on their home at 10 am.
- Concerned with how the adjacent structure has blocked views to the west. Wants the adjacent development to remove the top floor to bring back the view. The future structure must demonstrate that no public views are blocked.
- Concerned that the rooftop decks and balconies create noise, resulting in a loss of privacy for the adjacent properties and across the street. Other properties with decks have parties and fireworks that are a neighborhood nuisance.
- Concerned that development has stripped the sites of trees.
- Concerned with the number of units proposed. Wants a smaller building with 12 units or less.
- Concerned with the availability of on street parking. Parking is inadequate for the existing residences. Wants angled parking to get more stalls on the street. The nearby school and the public park cause a spillover demand for parking on the streets adjacent to the proposal.
- Concerned with how the alley has not been improved, nor will be improved with development.
- Concerned about the streetscape sidewalk to floor level relationship. The alleyscape grade to floor level relationship is important also.
- Concerned that the building is too close to the sidewalk.
- Concerned that the tree in the northwest corner will not be retained. Wants the tree preserved.
- Concerned with the proposed density is across the street from development with a lower density.
- Supported apartment development and density. Density allows residents to live closer to the city. Only 8% of land in Seattle is zoned for multifamily.
- Supported the proposal and is currently employed at the adjacent site. Lots of construction going on in the city means more work for everyone.

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 12th Ave S provides 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 residential design along the street frontage.

- a. The Board did support parking access from 12th Ave S, as shown in all of the Options. (CS2-B, PL3, DC1-A, DC1-B, DC1-C)
 - b. The Board recommended ground level or walk up residential entries. Below sidewalk level entries are not desirable by the Board. The Board noted that the same attention should be given to the residential units at ground level along the alley as those that have street frontage. (CS2-B, CS2-C, PL3, DC1-A, DC3-B, DC3-C)
 - c. The Board encouraged the use of high quality materials. A materials and color board shall be presented at the next meeting. (PL3, DC1-A, DC2-B, DC2-C, DC2-E, DC3-A, DC4-A)
2. **Massing:** The Board agreed that the retention of the northwest tree is important and discussed that the design for the northwest portion of the building façade needs to respond to the siting of the northern building.
- a. The Board recommended modulating the building, while keeping a strong residential street edge at the first floor. (CS2-B, DC2-A, DC2-D, DC2-E)
 - b. Adjacent development was discussed, and the Board agreed that modulation of the structure along the north property line was desirable and ground level landscaping should be considered. (CS2-B, CS2-C, CS2-D, DC2-A)
3. **Courtyard and Open Space:** The Board discussed the limited courtyard and deck options shown.
- a. The Board acknowledged that it may be difficult to provide upper level decks that do not impact the privacy of the adjacent properties; however the design must be sensitive to this condition and this needs to be addressed at the next meeting. (PL3, DC1-A, DC1-B, DC2-A, DC3-B, DC3-C, DC4-D)
 - b. The Board encouraged further development of the rooftop decks. (PL3, DC1-A, DC1-B, DC2-A, DC3-B, DC3-C, DC4-D)
 - c. The Board was concerned that the courtyard from 12th Ave S only addressed the onsite users of the two structures. The Board stressed that development of a strong open space concept that sets a positive precedent is critical. (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-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-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.

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

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

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.

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-4. Service Uses: Locate and design service entries, loading docks, and trash receptacles away from pedestrian areas or to a less visible portion of the site to reduce possible impacts of these facilities on building aesthetics and pedestrian circulation.

DC2 Architectural Concept: Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.

DC2-A Massing

DC2-A-1. Site Characteristics and Uses: Arrange the mass of the building taking into consideration the characteristics of the site and the proposed uses of the building and its open space.

DC2-A-2. Reducing Perceived Mass: Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of larger projects.

DC2-B Architectural and Facade Composition

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

DC2-B-2. Blank Walls: Avoid large blank walls along visible façades wherever possible. Where expanses of blank walls, retaining walls, or garage facades are unavoidable, include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians.

DC2-C Secondary Architectural Features

DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest: Add depth to facades where appropriate by incorporating balconies, canopies, awnings, decks, or other secondary elements into the façade design. Add detailing at the street level in order to create interest for the pedestrian and encourage active street life and window shopping (in retail areas).

DC2-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.

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

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

1. **Solid Waste Area (SMC 23.54.536):** The Code requires 375 SF. The applicant proposes 270 SF.

The solid waste storage room for the existing building is located in the garage with access from the garage door. This location was selected because it was the least intrusive on the apartment residents and on the neighbors.

The addition would double the existing solid waste area to also double the container storage to include sufficient storage for the additional units but would still be less than the code required amount. To depart from the required area and width the proposed room must be workable, approved by Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), and the additional space must increase the proposed residential density.

The location of the waste storage has already been approved by SPU as workable. The size is per the SPU guidelines for the amount of container storage for the anticipated number of units. The area above the required amount will be removed from the area of the residential units on the garage level. Therefore the proposed solid waste storage meets the conditions for the departure.

The Board indicated preliminary support for the departure because it allows for the solid waste room on the southern building on the development site to be used by the northern building, resulting in fewer impacts on building aesthetics and pedestrian circulation. (CS2, DC1-C-4

2. **Amenity Area (SMC 23.45.522):** The Code requires that 50% of the amenity area be landscaped. The applicant is proposing 20% to 32%.

The zoning code requires landscaping 50% of the amenity area which includes both the enlarged courtyard between the existing building and the addition and the enlarged connection to 12th Ave S along the new 10' wide walkway. The enlarged courtyard and walkway will become pathways to the new units in the addition from the main entrance on Holgate and from 12th Ave S., which is the connection to the main bus routes to downtown.

Because of the increased pedestrian traffic it will become more important as outdoor activity area for the combined development. A work out space is proposed to be located on the east side of the courtyard facing the new enlarged entrance to help activate the courtyard. The desire is for the courtyard to support other activities as well such as small gatherings, gardening, and children playing.

The Board indicated early support for the proposed departure for the southern portion of the developing site courtyard was granted to allow it to be landscaped to only 32% to allow it to support a broader range of resident's activities. Now with a larger and potentially more active courtyard the design shows that it can only support this activity and the many pathways through it if 20% of the courtyard is landscaped.

The Board indicated that they would consider the departure in order to accommodate an enhanced street-level pedestrian experience. (CS2-B, DC1-C)

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended the project return for a second EDG meeting in response to the guidance provided.