



City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

DESIGN
REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3018296

Address: 710 Cherry Street

Applicant: Kathryn Smith, SMR Architects for Plymouth Housing.

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, December 09, 2015

Board Members Present: Natalie Gualy, Chair
Curtis Bigelow
Dan Foltz
Christina Orr-Cahall
Barbara Busetti
Amy Taylor

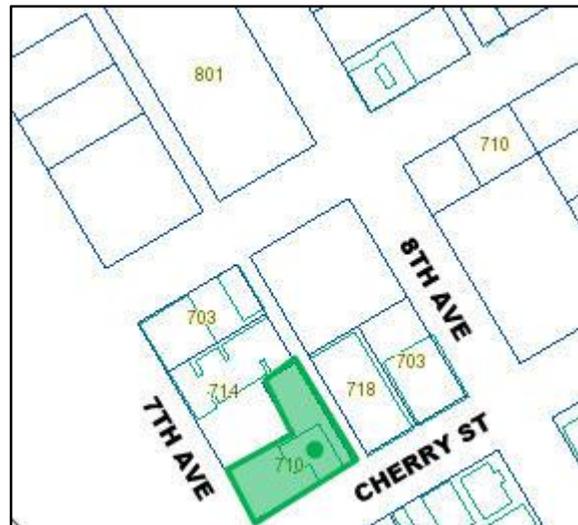
DPD Staff Present: Holly J. Godard

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Highrise (HR)

Nearby Zones: (North) Highrise (HR)
(South) Highrise (HR)
(East) Highrise (HR)
(West) Highrise (HR), with
Interstate 5

Lot Area: 9,599 square feet



Current Development:

Currently there is a three story office building with associated parking.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The area is characterized by midrise residential buildings, a religious institution and Interstate 5 across 7th Avenue.

Access:

Access to the site is via 7th Avenue, Cherry Street or the alley.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

There are no mapped Environmentally Critical Areas at the site.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project design is for low income housing of 80 residential units with indoor and outdoor amenity space for the residents.

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3018296) 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

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE March 11, 2015**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Public comments were positive for the project proposal. Comments included the following:

- Use textured metal panels and/or a selection of metal treatments if metal is to be specified.
- Use colored metal.

- The departure requests sound appropriate if there is some increase in material quality or other specific contribution to the public experience.

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 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-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-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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board approved of the building being sited as proposed due to the constraints of the site topography. The Board supported service uses and building mechanical systems being submerged into the site topography while common areas and entry functions are located along 7th Avenue. The Board suggested further study and design of the ground plane garden, garden wall, and right-of-way along Cherry Street including the existing cherry trees. The Board approved further explorations of a striving “rain garden” landscaping to continue landscape concepts on the block uphill and further east.

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-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-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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the importance of acknowledging the residential uses across the alley, privacy, sensitive noise receptors, views, etc., as interior uses are explored in the design process. The Board favored continuing the right-of-way (and on-site) garden style planting strip along Cherry Street. The Board favored the ground plane transparency shown at the meeting to support the floating box concept. The west façade is yet to be fully designed and detailed, but the Board encouraged the design team to consider façade massing including artful articulation and detailed expressions to communicate the interior uses. Use color and texture to accentuate the building due to its prominent location on the corner and as an important architectural form as seen from I-5 and the surrounding neighborhood. Nuances in massing choices should be explored to create clear design intent for the west and south façade.

PL2 Walkability: Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.

PL2-B Safety and Security

PL2-B-1. Eyes on the Street: Create a safe environment by providing lines of sight and encouraging natural surveillance.

PL2-B-2. Lighting for Safety: Provide lighting at sufficient lumen intensities and scales, including pathway illumination, pedestrian and entry lighting, and/or security lights.

PL2-B-3. Street-Level Transparency: Ensure transparency of street-level uses (for uses such as nonresidential uses or residential lobbies), where appropriate, by keeping views open into spaces behind walls or plantings, at corners, or along narrow passageways.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the importance of designing to the residents' needs, to safety precautions, and to noise and litter from I-5. The Board encouraged the designers to contemplate the interior two story space as an office and common room and its appearance from the exterior, day and night, and how working in a two story office would function for employee long term comfort.

DESIGN CONCEPT

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 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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed façade composition and noted that all facades are important, visible and worthy of high quality design solutions. The Board is looking for visual interest without pastiche for the west and south facades; a solution that is integral to the concept and expressed with appropriate scale, texture, and color. The Board was favorable to the floating box(es) concept. The Board asked the applicant to create a “vocabulary of windows” to further communicate the design intent. Small windows, large window and paired windows should reinforce the uses and façade language. The Board was split on its opinion of the building top element where the upper level common room is located. However, the full Board thought it should be reconsidered as it relates to the building forms and uses within.

DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.

DC4-A Exterior Elements and Finishes

DC4-A-1. Exterior Finish Materials: Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

DC4-A-2. Climate Appropriateness: Select durable and attractive materials that will age well in Seattle’s climate, taking special care to detail corners, edges, and transitions.

DC4-C Lighting

DC4-C-1. Functions: Use lighting both to increase site safety in all locations used by pedestrians and to highlight architectural or landscape details and features such as entries, signs, canopies, plantings, and art.

DC4-C-2. Avoiding Glare: Design project lighting based upon the uses on and off site, taking care to provide illumination to serve building needs while avoiding off-site night glare and light pollution.

DC4-D Trees, Landscape, and Hardscape Materials

DC4-D-1. Choice of Plant Materials: Reinforce the overall architectural and open space design concepts through the selection of landscape materials.

DC4-D-2. Hardscape Materials: Use exterior courtyards, plazas, and other hard surfaced areas as an opportunity to add color, texture, and/or pattern and enliven public areas through the use of distinctive and durable paving materials. Use permeable materials wherever possible.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the importance of the site as a defacto entry to downtown Seattle from I-5 and somewhat to Capitol Hill as Cherry street is heavily used by pedestrians and vehicles on 7th Avenue. Therefore the Board directed the applicant to be mindful to design a building with high quality and variable exterior materials, and to use lighting to highlight architectural elements and massing while providing a sense of security. Care must be taken to avoid glare or distraction. Integrate the proposed garden wall into the building concept. The concrete base along Cherry Street should be considered carefully for design, color and any contemplated treatment. The Board favored saving the beautiful and mature cherry trees on Cherry street and, if they need to be removed, to replace them with similar cherry 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.

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

1. **Side setbacks (SMC 23.45.518):** The Code requires 7 feet average and 5 feet minimum. The applicant proposes one foot 9 inch average and up to 0 minimum on the south side setback to better meet site conditions, (DC2-A, B, CS2-B).

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

2. **Front Setback (SMC 23.45.518):** The Code requires 7 feet average and 5 feet minimum. The applicant proposes 5 foot average and 5 foot minimum on levels 2-7. (DC2-A, B, CS2-B, C).

The Board indicated that they are favorable and willing to contemplate a front setback departure.

BOARD DIRECTION

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

June 10, 2015:

Revision to the above statement was requested by one Board member. The member requested that the notes reflect an objection to moving the project forward to MUP application. The Board Direction is amended as follows:

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

MUP Submittal

The applicant applied for a Master Use Permit on October 16, 2015

RECOMMENDATION December 9, 2015

The applicant presented the proposed design and reviewed the opportunities and constraints of the site, pedestrian environments, façade and materials development and open space concept. The Board clarified a few questions on landscaping, courtyard design, fencing, and interior uses. Members of the public had the following comments:

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comments were positive for the project proposal. Comments included the following:

- The project will provide important housing for the area.
- The project setbacks appear appropriate for the site.
- The open area next to the alley is a good addition to the area.
- The glass first floor is a good concept at that location for eyes on the street and corner.
- The Cherry landscape proposal is a welcome addition.
- The building massing is appropriate for the site and use.
- A trellis or glass feature in the residential courtyard would be useful for residents to be outdoors with some protection from sun and rain.
- Up-lighting for landscaping especially at the corner of Cherry and 7th would be helpful.
- Darker siding and darker window mullions may be a good alternative to explore.

Board deliberations centered on appropriateness of height, bulk and scale, fencing, cornice, color choices, building materials and departures. The Board thought the proposal addressed the street and alley well and at this steep site achieves a high degree of pedestrian and building interaction. The Board felt the building presents a cohesive design. The Board asked the

applicant to provide an appropriate level of lighting along the alley for safety without glare to the neighboring residences across the alley. The Board liked the signage options and preferred options 1, 2 or 4, but not option number 3. The Board liked the fenestration concept and appreciated the large windows for the units. They asked the applicant, and added a condition, to further refine the choice of colors for the windows and façade to provide less contrast between the two. They thought the fencing panels looked overly secure and asked the applicant to redesign the fencing, upper and lower, with fewer panels and more open wire mesh. This will also be a condition of the project. The Board agreed that the applicant responded to all early design guidance and was supportive of the materials proposed for the building. All members of the Design Board recommended approval of the following departure requests.

SUMMARY OF REQUESTED DEPARTURES

	Standard Requirement	Required	Request	Rationale for Departure	Board Direction
1	SMC 23.45.518 Rear Setback	The Code requires 10 foot rear building setback from the alley.	5 feet 6.5 inches building setback from alley.	Limiting the building coverage to gain efficiency and provide open space and views at the alley. CD1C, CS2B, CS2D	Recommend Approval
2	SMC 23.45.518 Side setback	The Code requires 7 foot average and 5 foot minimum setback from the street lot line	1 foot 8 inches average and variable minimum from 4 feet to 1.5 feet	Limiting the building lot coverage and to gain building layout efficiency and provide good livable units. CS1C1and 2, CS2A2 and 2, PL2B1, DC2D1, DC2D2.	Recommend Approval
3	SMC 23.45.518 Front setback	The Code requires 7 foot average and 5 foot minimum setback from the property line.	5 foot average and 5 foot minimum.	Limiting the building lot coverage and to gain building layout efficiency and provide good livable units and residential amenity space. CS1C1, CS1D2, PL2B1 and 3, DC2C1	Recommend Approval

Board Recommendation:

The recommendation summarized above was based on the design recommendation packet dated December 9, 2015 and the materials shown and described by the applicant at the Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, the Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design. In addition, the six (6)

member Board supported the departure requests and **recommended approval with conditions** of the design to the Director. The conditions are as follows:

1. Redesign the building to omit the roof overhang and create a smaller roof cornice, parapet, or other architectural element.
2. Create a color combination of wall and window trim that is less contrasting than shown in the recommendation packet.
3. Redesign the lower site gates and fences to have fewer fence panels and more openness in the fence mesh fabric.