



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Numbers: 3018400

Address: 8511 15th Ave NE

Applicant: JP Emery with Ankrom Moisan Architects, Inc
for Bryon Ziegler with Aegis Living

Date of Meeting: Monday, May 18, 2015

Board Members Present: Ivana Begley, Chair
Eric Blank
Martine Zettle

Board Members Absent: Julia Levitt
Christina Pizana

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

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: LR2 (Multifamily Residential – Lowrise 2)
Northgate Overlay District

Nearby Zones: (North) LR2
(South) LR2
(East) LR2
(West) SF5000 (Single-family 5000)

Lot Area: 56,771 square feet



Current Development:

The site is located in the Maple Leaf neighborhood, northwest of the intersection of 85th Street NE and 15th Ave NE, east of the Maple Leaf Reservoir and Playfield. On the site is an existing structure which is currently used for classroom/education functions. The existing building is sited roughly in the middle of the lot with parking and two curb cuts along 85th. On the eastern portion of the site is a mature tree stand known as “Waldo Wood” which is protected from development by an easement between the property owner and Seattle’s Parks department. The site has some views of downtown when facing to the southwest in the southwest quadrant of the site.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The site abuts multi-family buildings to the north, single-family and multi-family buildings to the east, single-family and multi-family buildings to the south, and Maple Leaf Reservoir to the west. The area is a blend of traditional craftsman’s and bungalows, modern homes, older apartment buildings, and ‘craftsman-inspired’ townhomes.

Access Opportunities

The site is located west of 15th Ave NE (a minor arterial) and north of NE 85th St (a residential access street). Vehicle and pedestrian access to the project will be from NE 85th St. A bus stop is located north of the intersection of 15th Ave NE and NE 85th St.

Zoning and Overlay Designation

The project site is within the Northgate Overlay District and is zoned LR2. Parcels to the north, east, and south are also zoned LR2. The parcel to the west is zoned SF5000.

Access and Parking:

Pedestrian and vehicle access is proposed from 85th Street NE.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

None.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes a 3-story assisted living facility with 62 living units and 18 memory care units. Thirty-one underground parking stalls are proposed.

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The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3018400) 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

At the Early Design Guidance meeting the architect presented three massing alternatives.

Massing Study A (viewed from the southwest) — is a 3-story rectangular shaped structure with the long axis oriented north to south on the site. On the west side of the site vehicle access is provide from NE 85th St. The access is designed with a circular drop off and pick up area with vehicle access to an underground garage north of the circular drive.



Massing Study B (viewed from the southwest) — are two 3-story rectangular shaped structures connected by 1-story structure. The long axes of the structures are oriented north to south on the site. On the south side of the site vehicle access is provided from NE 85th St. The access is designed as a half circular drive. Vehicle access to an underground garage is east of the eastern structure.



Massing Study C (viewed from the southwest) — is a 3-story, L-shaped structure. On west side of the site vehicle access is provide from NE 85th St. The access is design with a circular drop off and pick up area and vehicle access to an underground garage is west of the circular drive. This was the applicant preferred scheme.



PUBLIC COMMENT

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

- Concerned about losing southern views and having less daylight than currently enjoyed.
- Concerned about future scale of the structure and shared pedestrian vehicle access.
- Commented support that the proposal was not a residential development with a number of residential structures. Requested that the board consider a true gable roof on the structure and whether a height departure could be granted.
- Stated that the building face was potentially too close to 85th.

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. Structure Orientation/Location, Massing, and Site Response.** The Board noted the L-scheme (Massing Study C) was a logical response for the proposal. The Board was pleased with the proposed northern setback for the structure. The Board recognized that a south facing location on the northern portion of the structure was the best location for the Memory Care garden. The Board was supportive of the outbuilding as a 'gatehouse' adjacent to the pump house. The Board wants to see the proposed build scale is maintained. The Board expressed concerns about the north façade. They suggested more and deeper modulation. At the next Design Review meeting the applicant should provide shadow studies that demonstrate that casting shadows on neighbors is minimized. The Board recognized the concern for lost views; however their purview does not include protection of views from private property. They suggested that the northern façade be well articulated and that landscaping features be introduced to benefit the adjacent sites.
 - a. The Board looks forward to seeing the details for the façade composition; proposed textures, articulation, and building materials to further express the structure. (CS2-A, CS2-D, CS3-A-4, PL3-A, PL3-C, PL4-C, DC1-A, DC2, DC4)
 - b. The pedestrian experience along the NE 85th St and the southern façade needs to be given special consideration. (CS2-C, PL1, PL2, PL4-A, PL4-C, DC1-A, DC3-C)

- c. DPD requests a privacy study documenting the visual relationship between the proposed façade fenestration and the adjacent sites. Elevation views should detail existing windows and outdoor space whose privacy will be impacted by proposed development. The location of existing windows should inform the location of proposed windows and landscape screening along the east façade. (CS2-B, CS2-D)
- 2. Architectural Context and Style.** The Board noted that active uses within building need to be aligned with the existing eastern wooded area of the site. Interior functions might spill out into outdoor space. The Board was supportive of a Neo-classical design for the site. The Board agreed that the Massing Study C reads well as an institution. (PL1-B-1, PL2-A, PL2-B, PL2-B-3, CS3-A-4, DC1, DC2, DC4, CS2-D, DC1, DC2, DC4)
 - 3. Amenities/Landscaping/Trees.** The Board discussed the site landscaping design and would like to see the following:
 - The deciduous and sweetgum tree shown for the north side of the property should be retained. (DC3)
 - The Board requested further study of landscaping design to provide benefit and privacy of the residents and residents of townhomes north of the site. (DC3)
 - The sidewalk/pedestrian route along 85th should receive significant treatment as it is a critical pathway to the proposal. (PL2-B)
 - Signage and the landscaping design are important elements of the proposal. (DC4-C, PL2-B-2)
 - The Board expressed concerned about memory care garden proximity to auto court, but felt the landscaping and water feature does an adequate job of creating visual and auditory separation. (DC3)
 - 4. Pedestrian/Vehicle Access and Solid Waste Collection.** The Board complimented the applicant for providing pedestrian access from 15th Ave NE and NE 85th St. (CS2-C, DC1-A, PL3-A)
 - a. The Board would like to see more information on the solid waste storage location at the next design review meeting. (DC1-A, DC1-C, PL3-A)
 - 5. Colors and Materials.** The Board recommended high quality elements, architectural features, details, and finishes. Human scaled elements should provide a strong connection between the project and the public realm. A materials/colors board shall be provided at the next meeting. (DC2-D, DC4-A, PL2-B)
 - d. The design should set a context of visual interest and human scale for all four facades. (CS3-A, DC4-A)
 - e. Regarding blank walls, it is recommended that any blank walls should include design treatments of high quality elements and finishes to respond to human scale and visual interest. (DC2-B, DC4-A)
 - 6. Security and Exterior Lighting.** The Board commented that the gate to nowhere at the conservation easement is a missed opportunity to create a connection between the building

and public way. At the next meeting the applicant should address security and exterior lighting for the building. (PL2-B-2, PL3-A, DC4-C)

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-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-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-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.

CS3-B Local History and Culture

CS3-B-1. Placemaking: Explore the history of the site and neighborhood as a potential placemaking opportunity. Look for historical and cultural significance, using neighborhood groups and archives as resources.

CS3-B-2. Historical/Cultural References: Reuse existing structures on the site where feasible as a means of incorporating historical or cultural elements into the new project.

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.

PL2-D Wayfinding

PL2-D-1. Design as Wayfinding: Use design features as a means of wayfinding wherever possible.

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

PL4 Active Transportation: Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.

PL4-A Entry Locations and Relationships

PL4-A-1. Serving all Modes of Travel: Provide safe and convenient access points for all modes of travel.

PL4-A-2. Connections to All Modes: Site the primary entry in a location that logically relates to building uses and clearly connects all major points of access.

PL4-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists

PL4-B-1. Early Planning: Consider existing and future bicycle traffic to and through the site early in the process so that access and connections are integrated into the project along with other modes of travel.

PL4-B-2. Bike Facilities: Facilities such as bike racks and storage, bike share stations, shower facilities and lockers for bicyclists should be located to maximize convenience, security, and safety.

PL4-B-3. Bike Connections: Facilitate connections to bicycle trails and infrastructure around and beyond the project.

PL4-C Planning Ahead For Transit

PL4-C-1. Influence on Project Design: Identify how a transit stop (planned or built) adjacent to or near the site may influence project design, provide opportunities for placemaking.

PL4-C-3. Transit Connections: Where no transit stops are on or adjacent to the site, identify where the nearest transit stops and pedestrian routes are and include design features and connections within the project design as appropriate.

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-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.

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-B Signage

DC4-B-1. Scale and Character: Add interest to the streetscape with exterior signs and attachments that are appropriate in scale and character to the project and its environs.

DC4-B-2. Coordination with Project Design: Develop a signage plan within the context of architectural and open space concepts, and coordinate the details with façade design, lighting, and other project features to complement the project as a whole, in addition to the surrounding context.

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.

DC4-E Project Assembly and Lifespan

DC4-E-1. Deconstruction: When possible, design the project so that it may be deconstructed at the end of its useful lifetime, with connections and assembly techniques that will allow reuse of materials.

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 **FIRST** Early Design Guidance the following departures were requested:

1. **STRUCTURE WIDTH (SMC 23.45.527):** The Code requires that apartments in the LR2 Zone may not exceed 90' in structure width. The applicant proposes a structure width of 181' 6'' for the northern portion of the structure.

The Board was inclined to support the departure request because the narrower street presence that the building has along NE 85th St allows for a stronger visual connection with the park for pedestrians. The L-shaped configuration pulls the main massing away from the street, minimizing the impact of the building size to the surrounding neighborhood and park views. Also, the narrow building massing along NE 85th St allows for equal entrances to the site for cars and pedestrians. Landscaping is blended from 85th, into the open court and smooths the transition from the site to the park. (CS3, PL2).

2. **SETBACKS (SMC 23.45.518):** The Code requires 5' side setback and 15' rear setback for apartments in the LR2 Zone.
 - 1) The applicant proposes 2'-11" side setback, and
 - 2) A 4'-2" rear setback.

The proposed encroach at the northeast corner of the site achieves a uniform residential unit width. The North elevation of the building will be setback an extra 9' from the adjacent townhomes.

The Board was inclined to support the departure request because the additional area needed at the northeast corner of the site allows for a portion of the massing along the north side of the site to be pulled back from the existing townhouses. The Board also felt that the space between the existing townhouses and the North side of the building creates more space for landscaping and visual buffers between the two sets of residents. (CS3, DC3).

BOARD DIRECTION

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