



# City of Seattle

Department of Construction and Inspections  
Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN  
REVIEW

## RECOMMENDATION OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3018576

Address: 1203 East Spruce Street

Applicant: Bradley Khouri for b9 architects

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, August 24, 2016

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

Board Members Absent: Christina Orr-Cahall

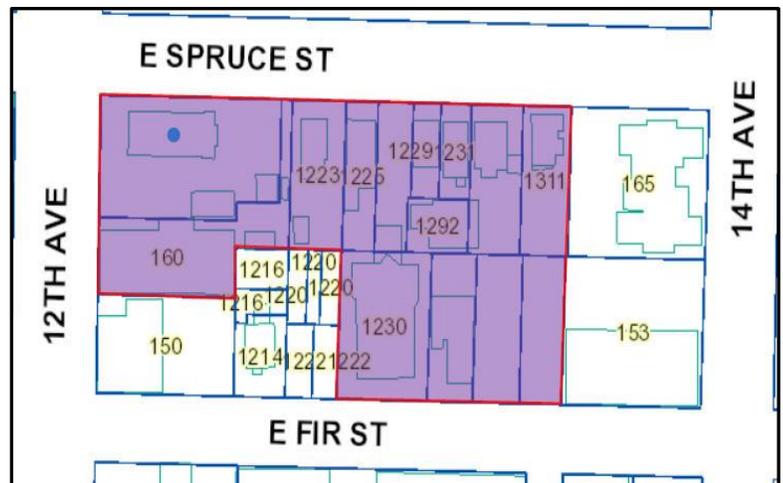
DPD Staff Present: Holly J. Godard

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial 3, 65 height limit, Pedestrian overlay (NC3P-65) and Lowrise 3 (LR3)

Nearby Zones: (North) Lowrise 3 (LR3)  
(South) Neighborhood Commercial 3, 65 height limit, Pedestrian overlay (NC3P-65) and Commercial 2 (C2-65)  
(East) Lowrise 3 (LR3)  
(West) Neighborhood Commercial 3, 65 foot height limit, Pedestrian overlay (NC3P-65)

Lot Area: 75,309 square feet



**Current Development:**

Currently on the site there is a parking lot, multifamily and single family homes and a religious institution.

**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

Surrounding development includes a warehouse, the King County Juvenile Detention Center, multifamily and single family dwellings, and the landmarked Washington Hall.

**Access:**

Access to the site is via E Spruce Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue and East Fir Street.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:**

Steep slope Environmentally Critical Areas (ECA) are mapped at the site.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The project proposal is to construct three residential buildings containing approximately 370 residential units, 12,000 square feet of commercial space and vehicle parking for approximately 220 vehicles below grade. In addition, the proposal seeks to rezone those areas of the development site in LR3 zone to NC3-65 via a contract rezone. The LR3 lots included in the rezone request are a portion of the lot at the corner of 12 Avenue and East Spruce Street and all lots to the east of that lot.

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3018576) at this website:

[http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design\\_Review\\_Program/Project\\_Reviews/Reports/default.asp](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 SDCI:

**Mailing Public Resource Center**  
**Address:** 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000  
P.O. Box 34019  
Seattle, WA 98124-4019  
**Email:** [PRC@seattle.gov](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: August 12,2015**

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

One public comment letter was received during the public comment period which opposes the contract rezone to a higher density zone. Members of the public offered comment during the Early Design Guidance meeting public comment period. The comments were varied and included the following:

- Washington Hall is a National Landmark building and the project proponents should work with the operators to address their desires and concerns.
- Parking access that is minimized is a good design approach.
- Parking access on Spruce is a good idea to avoid locating an access drive near Washington Hall.
- Open space at the development should be designed for families with children so that there is an element of enclosure and security.
- Any sustainable, net-zero, efforts are very important to include.
- Washington Hall is host to anchor organizations Historic Seattle, 206 Zulu, Hidmo, and Voices Rising which are interested in seeing the physical integrity of the Hall remain and improve. The programs at the Hall are central to an established and growing arts and cultural community. In this light, the new development should support the arts community in its design; the retail size and type offered, housing choices offered, housing costs, and open spaces it creates.
- The proposed project is in the Central Area of Seattle and should strive to integrate into the established neighborhood. The building should relate to the neighborhood to the east in design and access.
- The building design should contemplate that Washington Hall is an active music hall and new building residents should understand that concerts are held there regularly. The building design and building material choices should respond to uses at Washington Hall; music, noise, and outside activities.
- Equitable and universal design should shape the building program for people of all ages, abilities, choices, families, etc.
- Erode the upper levels of the building on the east facades for a better sense of scale.
- Create a permeable lower level, actually and visually for pedestrians, light and air.
- Design part of the project open space to be recognizably semi-public or private so there are more secure play areas for families.
- Retail uses should be strong on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- Wrap retail uses around the corner onto East Spruce Street.

## **RECOMMENDATION MEETING: August 24,2016**

Comments received at the Recommendation meeting include the following:

- The amount of the proposed commercial space appears to be a good fit for the area. The artist Mr. Paul Rucker has presented a good direction to communicate the art and history of the area through visual means. The curb cut on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue is appropriate because it will serve the lot to south as well.

- The project is making efforts to illuminate the history of the African American culture in the area and these efforts are appreciated. Efforts to communicate Washington Hall events is appreciated. The Historic Central Area Arts & Cultural District (HCAACD) is supportive of the design efforts and have been involved in design discussions with the applicant team.
- Live work units can function as residential units so it is best for the greater project to keep the live work units functioning as the commercial units. (Planner note: live work are defined as a commercial use in the Land Use Code.) Make sure that they have signage at the units to indicate the commercial function within.
- Make sure to keep the design narrative focused on the fact that this development is part of the Central Area and not Capitol Hill.
- Design references to music and the Washington Hall are good, but there are a lot of other references to other arts and culture to include. A broader representation would be a good thing to discover, uncover and reference.
- Consider the larger area of the Central Area as the design moves forward.
- Make every effort to avoid gates at the entry points so that neighbors may use the internal open space as presented at the design meetings.
- Bring in the African aesthetic of design in an abstract manner to the project. (The commenter noted that no one really may know what that aesthetic is.)
- It is important to retain the affordable housing programs of the project.
- HCAACD will advocate for a Central Area Design Review Board and Central area design guidelines and hopes the Board will support these efforts too.
- Be aware of coming King County development across Spruce Street.
- The public spaces appear to pleasingly vary in design and purpose. There could be a more conscious use of art in passageways.

## **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.

### **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-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-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.

**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.

At the Early Design Guidance (EDG) meeting the Board directed the applicants to design with intent to marry the building forms and site relationships to the neighboring Washington Hall. In order to achieve this there must be a visible synergy between Washington Hall and the new proposal. The design challenge includes considerations to avoid looming over Washington Hall or to build too closely and “crowd” the building. Additionally, open space and/or passageways at the east property edge should be designed for a sense of safety and security. The new building should include sound mitigation for new residents along the east facades. Opportunities to create a transition in scale should include eroding the building edge at the east façade, landscaping, and significantly large trees to fit the space. The east façade and vertical building circulation should be considered as a front façade and entry as much as elsewhere on the site. The Board thought that the relationship to future development, and breaks in development, across E. Spruce Street, should be evident in the massing for this project.

At the Recommendation meeting the Board felt the project design met the goals and guidance outlined at the EDG meeting. The Board commended the project approach to place-making by providing small commercial areas, live-work units, for small businesses to locate, and the “warm” commercial areas to be provided along East Spruce Street. The building massing, setback and architectural language near Washington Hall was an appropriate design response to the Historic Landmark. The East Spruce entry to the interior of the site was approved by the Board as an important break in the East Spruce façade and a good reference point for commercial uses at that location.

**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.

At the Early Design Guidance meeting the Board directed the applicant to consider active and dedicated open space for kids and that the centrally located open space was the best option to achieve this. The Board directed the applicant to fully design the open space for active, passive, and pass-through options. The Board agreed that affordable options and family-sized units are very important to include in the project. The project’s landscaping including pathways and planting should be cultural signifiers to provide information and to provide a sense of place. Use varying materials; explore rhythms and patterns from the cultural arts including creative signage and lighting. Use form-giving elements to direct pedestrians with pathway design width, materials, and forms. Create a sequence of openings and compressions; openings for views and visual identification of entries and important areas, and compression to direct and slow pedestrians.

At the Recommendation meeting the Board approved of the large courtyard element at the interior of the site and the various walkways to reach the interior courtyard. They were please to understand that the courtyard will be left open and gated only if deemed to be necessary during evenings. The Board was complementary of the wayfinding and signage plans to help direct visitors which will provide a cohesive and strong music concept.

## 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-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-D Scale and Texture**

**DC2-D-1. Human Scale:** Incorporate architectural features, elements, and details that are of human scale into the building facades, entries, retaining walls, courtyards, and exterior spaces in a manner that is consistent with the overall architectural concept

**DC2-D-2. Texture:** Design the character of the building, as expressed in the form, scale, and materials, to strive for a fine-grained scale, or “texture,” particularly at the street level and other areas where pedestrians predominate.

**DC3 Open Space Concept: Integrate open space design with the building design so that they complement each other.**

### **DC3-A Building-Open Space Relationship**

**DC3-A-1. Interior/Exterior Fit:** Develop an open space concept in conjunction with the architectural concept to ensure that interior and exterior spaces relate well to each other and support the functions of the development.

**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.

**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.

At the Early Design Guidance meeting the Board directed the applicant to use high quality materials throughout the design. Materiality should reflect the neighborhood buildings and uses. The Board noted that every façade is important to be fully articulated and carefully designed at this site to relate to neighboring uses. The Board directed the applicant to retain proposed retail uses on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue and wrap it around to East Spruce Street and to encourage local retail establishments to lease at this location by means of design choices in size, flexibility, and access. The Board felt that the restaurant location, mid-block off of East Spruce and the central open space is a good locale to activate the open space and the East Spruce façade.

At the Recommendation meeting the Board stated their support for the architectural and facade composition of the exterior and courtyard facades. They were supportive of the large interior open space and the surrounding landscape plans. The Board supported the design team's architectural concept to create a unified and functional design. The Board thought that the project fits well on the site and within its surroundings.

## **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).

At the time of the Early Design Guidance no departures were requested.

At the Recommendation meeting the applicant identified two development standard departures, one regarding live work unit internal mezzanine standards and the other a parking access request.

- 1. Live Work Units (SMC 23.47A.009E1):** The non-residential portion of the live work unit shall extend the width of the street-level street-facing façade and shall extend a minimum depth of 15 feet from the street-level street-facing facade. The applicant proposes a 9-foot minimum depth in the Spruce Street live work units and an 8.5-foot minimum depth in the Fir Street live work units. The applicant's rationale for the departure is to be able to move the building slightly back from the street facing facades to give more room at the sidewalk and to maintain the large central open space. (DC2B, DC3A.)

The Board unanimously approved the departure citing their agreement that both the large interior open space and sidewalk space were important and deliberate design elements to maintain to better meet the design guidance. (DC2B, DC3A)

- 2. Commercial Parking Access (SMC 23.47A.032A1c):** The Code allows access across one side street. The applicant proposes access across two side streets.

The Board unanimously approved the departure citing the applicant's decision to provide an easement for the benefit of the property to the south thus reducing the number of curb cuts to interrupt the pedestrian environment on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue. (CS3A, CS2B)

## **BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the RECOMMENDATION meeting, the Board recommended approval of the project with no recommended conditions.