



**ADMINISTRATIVE DESIGN REVIEW
EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE
SOUTHWEST**

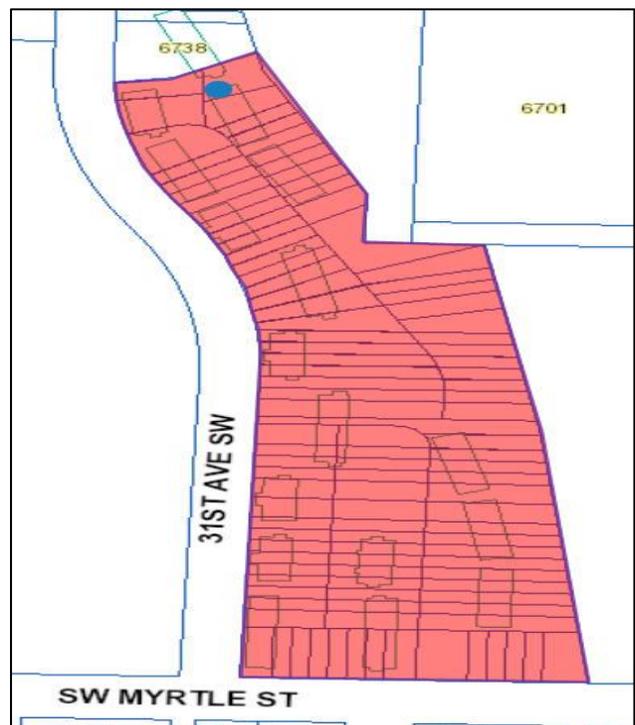
Project Number: 3018597
Address: 6800 31st Avenue Southwest
Applicant: Milbrandt Architects for David Avenell with Polygon Northwest
Date: May 31, 2015
DPD Staff: Tami Garrett, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Lowrise 2 (L-2) and Lowrise 4 (L-4) per Ordinance 121164

Nearby Zones: (North) L-4
(South) Single Family 5000 (SF 5000)
(East) SF 5000 and Lowrise 1 (LR1)
(West) LR1

Lot Area: 188,653 square feet (sq. ft.)



Current Development:

There is no existing development on this site.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

Surrounding development includes a mix of single family homes, townhouse developments and institution establishments. City-owned property (High Point Community Center with multipurpose outdoor playfield) and Seattle Public School property (West Seattle Elementary School) are located immediately to the west, across the street from the subject site. The properties east of the project site are a religious facility (Thien-An Baptist Church) and a mortuary business (Forest Lawn Mortuary/Crematory/Cemetery). High Point Community residential properties are to the north and single family residences are across the street, south of the proposal.

This corner proposal site oriented at the northeast corner of the intersection of 31st Avenue Southwest and Southwest Myrtle Street is sited on the southwestern edge of the High Point Community development. As noted above, the neighborhood character outside of the High Point Community to the east, west and south consists of institutions and single family residences. The neighborhood character within the High Point Community boundary consists of housing types that are typical to this community and reflect an architectural style and siting patterns that are representative of a planned development. The existing residential structures are two-story houses or three-story townhomes with varying types of entries, siting and access.

Access:

Vehicular access to the project site is possible from both 31st Avenue Southwest and Southwest Myrtle Street.

Environmentally Critical Areas (ECAs):

A portion of the property along the eastern boundary line is identified as Environmentally Critical Areas (ECA) 1-Steep Slope. The site's existing topography is characterized as having grades descending from the west towards the east with an elevation change of approximately 20'. The existing vegetation consists of primarily field grass, blackberry brambles and several mature native trees.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is for the design and construction of a 54 unit residential development to include 17 single family residences, one three-unit townhouse structure, three four-unit townhouse structures, two five-unit townhouse structures and two six-unit townhouse structures. Each residential structure is planned to be two-stories with a daylight basement and include private garages to accommodate one or two enclosed parking spaces. Parking for 79

vehicles will be provided on the site either within each unit attached garage or unclosed surface parking stalls.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The subject property includes portions of Block 34 (34-2 through 34-7) located at the southernmost area of the High Point Community Plat. This “for sale” residential proposal is being developed as a partnership between the applicant and the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA).

The proposed residential housing project has been designed to reflect the redevelopment goals of the High Point Community as stated in the High Point Design Book, through a collaborative effort with SHA. The High Point Design Book, created by SHA, City of Seattle and Design Consultants, contains very detailed Design Standards for each block in the High Point Community Plat and also cites general architectural, landscape and drainage design guidelines. Design development reflects the influence of the City of Seattle Design Guidelines, the High Point Design Book and SHA.

One design scheme was offered by the applicant. This scheme proposes a 54 unit residential development comprised of single-family residences and townhouse structures whose location and access is illustrated in the design packet. The packet is available online by entering the project number (3018597) 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

PUBLIC COMMENT

DPD received several public comments concerning this project during this Early Design Guidance Review phase. The public concerns voiced focused on parking and traffic impacts and weren't pertaining to the development's design.

PRIORITIES

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and reviewing public comment, the DPD staff provided the following siting and design guidance described below. DPD staff has identified the following Citywide Design

Guidelines of highest priority for this project. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

A. Site Planning

- A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics. The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.**

In general, DPD staff agrees that the applicant has sited the proposed structures in the most logical pattern in order to respond to the site's existing topography, significant tree protection areas and established easements per the High Point Master Plan.

- A-2 Streetscape Compatibility. The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.**

The existing character of the High Point Community neighborhood is defined by residential structures having varied front setbacks and principal entrance orientations as they relate to the established right-of-ways. Fenced ground-level front yards, pathways and landscaping typically separate the residences from the street lot lines. The design appears to be integrated into the street system established for the High Point Community.

The DPD staff voiced concern regarding the siting of the two southernmost townhouse structures (Bldgs. 7 and 8) and requested that the applicant explore shifting the specified buildings in a manner that better aligns with the other townhouse structures along 31st Avenue Southwest.

- A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street. Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.**

The proposal illustrates most of the single family residences with entrances abutting the proposed vehicular driveway whose addresses will not be visible from the two streets- 31st Avenue Southwest and Southwest Myrtle Street. DPD feels that design methods (wayfinding, signage) to address this concern should be explored and provided in the next design iteration.

- A-4 Human Activity. New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.**

The proposal demonstrates an internal private drive that the majority of the residences will utilize in order to obtain vehicular access to onsite parking. The DPD staff observed that none of the proposed townhouse structures provided direct access from the individual units to the private drive and was concerned that this design would discourage interaction amongst the neighbors across the private drive. DPD staff stated that design

solutions should be explored to incorporate additional functionality in the vehicular circulation space that would promote community and positive interaction.

- A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street. For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.**

DPD staff voiced concern that the proposed development did not illustrate pathways or direct connections to the streets. The future design should address this concern.

- A-7 Residential Open Space. Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.**

The High Point Design Book includes an Open Space Network Plan that “*provides a wide range of parks and open spaces designed to connect with each other and the natural open spaces on the community’s edges...*” The parks are identified as “Community Parks”, “Neighborhood Parks” and “Pocket Parks”. Community Parks are large sized parks. Neighborhood Parks are designed to serve residents living within a two block radius. Pocket Parks are smaller parks situated on residential streets fronted directly by houses.

The DPD staff review of the proposed project identified a nearby public community park (High Point Park) and private residential open spaces (individual decks/porches) as possible open space that would be utilized by the residents. DPD staff is concerned that the design lacked a main pedestrian access point from 31st Avenue Southwest.

The future design should clearly document planned residential open spaces and clearly differentiate between public residential open spaces and private residential open spaces. Opportunities to create a dedicated pedestrian pathway which would provide a direct connection to informal pathways from the City Park onto the subject site should be explored. The creation of focal points throughout the site should also be explored.

- A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access. Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties, and pedestrian safety.**

- A-10 Corner Lots. Building on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.**

The DPD staff recognized that this corner lot should also be considered a gateway lot due to its visibility by persons entering the High Point Community from the south. The DPD staff appreciated that the parking and vehicular access to the site is planned to be sited away from the corner. However, concerns remain with lack of residential frontage/entrances along Southwest Myrtle Street. The future design of those building’s within close proximity to Southwest Myrtle Street (Bldgs. 8 and 10) should be tailored to address that street front in a meaningful manner. Architectural features such as wrap-around decks/stairs and secondary garage entrance were options offered by the DPD staff as design solutions that would meet the intent of this guidance.

D. Pedestrian Environment

- D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances.** Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.

A conceptual lighting plan is required to illustrate that this guideline is appropriately addressed.

- D-2 Blank Walls.** Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.

- D-7 Personal Safety and Security.** Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.

A conceptual lighting plan should be provided to illustrate that this guideline is appropriately addressed.

E. Landscaping

- E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site.** Landscaping, including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture, and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.

DPD recommends development of a landscape design that incorporates landscaping cues from the nearby parks owned by the City and public open spaces designed by SHA. The plan should include details regarding future landscaping elements appropriate for corner sites consistent with the landscaping design offered in the High Point design book.

- E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions.** The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.

The plan should include details regarding the preservation of the identified exceptional trees and the proposed landscaping design treatment for those sloped areas between the residential structures.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

DPD's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based upon the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure(s). DPD's recommendation will be reserved until the final Design Review recommendation phase.

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

1. **Front Façade Modulation (SMC 23.45.012.A):** The Code states modulation shall be required if the front façade width exceeds 30’ with no principal entrance facing the street, or 40’ with a principal entrance facing the street. The applicant requests a departure that would allow reduced modulation for one single family residence (Building 10) and all of the townhomes whose structures’ facades face onto Southwest Myrtle Street and 31st Avenue Southwest respectively.

2. **Interior Façade Modulation (SMC 23.45.012.C):** The Code states, within a cluster development, all interior facades wider that 40’ shall be modulated. The applicant requests a departure that would allow the interior facades of several of the structures within this cluster development be subject to reduced interior modulation requirements.

Departure Summary Table

STANDARD	REQUIREMENT	PROPOSAL	APPLICANT’S JUSTIFICATION	INITIAL DPD RECOMMENDATION
FRONT FAÇADE MODULATION SMC 23.45.012.A	Front façade modulation is required if the front façade length exceeds 30’ with no principal entrance facing the street.	Allow reduced modulation. Specific measurements will be determined after the initial zoning review of the Master Use Permit (MUP) application.	This departure is requested to allow a more compatible fit within the High Point Community context.	DPD stated it is willing to entertain this departure in order to allow building wall facades that will add variety and interest to pedestrians in the public realm. This departure will be contingent upon the buildings’ designs in consultation with SHA and advisement from DPD’s zoning reviewer. (A-1, B-1, C-1, C-2, C-3)

<p>INTERIOR FAÇADE MODULATION SMC 23.45.012.C</p>	<p>Interior façade modulation is required if structures, within a cluster development, have interior facades wider than 40’.</p>	<p>Allow reduced interior modulation. Specific structures and their measurements will be determined after the initial zoning review of the Master Use Permit (MUP) application.</p>	<p>This departure is requested to allow a more compatible fit within the High Point Community context.</p>	<p>DPD stated it is willing to entertain this departure in order to allow building wall facades that will add variety and interest to pedestrians in the public realm. This departure will be contingent upon the buildings’ designs in consultation with SHA and advisement from DPD’s zoning reviewer. (A-1, B-1, C-1, C-2, C-3)</p>
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RECOMMENDATIONS

DPD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE phase, the DPD staff recommended moving forward to MUP application.