



City of Seattle

Department of Construction and Inspections
Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN
REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3018682

Address: 323 Bellevue Ave E

Applicant: Matt Discoll of D/ARCH LLC

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, May 11, 2016

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

Board Members Absent: Dan Foltz

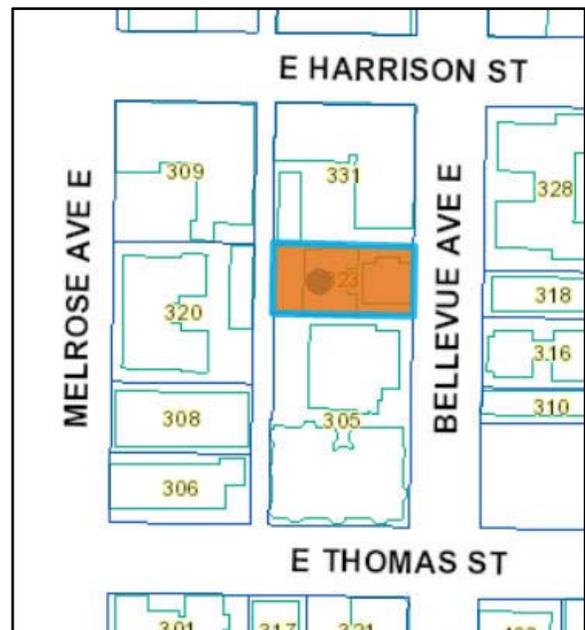
SDCI Staff Present: Magda Hogness

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Midrise with heights limits of 60 feet; (MR) located in the Capitol Hill Urban Village.

Nearby Zones: The Midrise (MR) zone extends north toward E Mercer St, west to I-5, south toward E Olive Way, east to Harvard Ave E. Across the interstate, the zoning changes to Seattle Mixed 85 (SM-85).

Lot Area: Located on Bellevue Ave N between E Harrison St and E Thomas St, the parcel contains 7,200 square feet. This midblock site has 60' of frontage along Bellevue Ave N.



Access: The subject property includes vehicular access from the alley.

Current Development:

A two-story, 6-unit apartment building known as “The Sterling” currently exists on the site. The wood framed building, originally constructed in 1956 for Sterling Taylor, was designed by notable Seattle architect Paul Hayden Kirk. The building’s private unit entrances, high ribbon windows, and patios are designed in the spirit of the single family home. The Landmarks Preservation Board recently denied nomination of the building for landmark status.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The mid-block site is located on the western edge of the Capitol Hill neighborhood, within the West Slope District as mapped in the Capitol Hill Guidelines. Bounded by Broadway Ave to the east and the I-5 to the west, this area slopes steeply down towards the interstate and the Cascade neighborhood. Densely developed and predominantly composed of three-story multifamily buildings, many of which feature brick exteriors, the area’s small infill projects add to the housing supply as single family structures are replaced with higher density housing.

Surrounded primarily by other apartment buildings, nearby buildings were constructed in a wide range, from the early 20th century to 2014. The site immediately north of the site contains an L-shaped, three-story apartment building built in 1923. Surface parking and a two story parking garage is accessed from a driveway off Bellevue Ave and off the alley. Across the street to the east, is a two-story wood framed apartment building. Thomas Street Mini Park is also located across the street at the corner of Bellevue and Thomas. Directly to the south is a four story precast apartment building built originally in 1908. This building has parking access off the alley. Further south, on the corner of Bellevue and Thomas is a 4-story brick apartment building. Across the alley to the west, is a seven story, multifamily building with access to parking located off Melrose Ave.

Other apartment buildings in the immediate area typically range from 2 to 7 stories. Early and mid-20th century structures in the area tend to be brick construction; while newer buildings are wood framed with a variety of finish materials.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a 6 story structure containing 45-47 units above a below grade parking garage, accessed off the alley; existing structure to be demolished.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE January 14, 2015

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3018682) 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 SDCl:

Mailing Public Resource Center

Address: 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000

P.O. Box 34019

Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Prior to the Early Design Guidance meeting, the applicant provided three massing schemes; each option has similar square footage, parking for 16 vehicles in a garage accessed off the alley, and green roofs. Massing Option A shows a six story structure containing 29 residential units, a mix of studio and one bedroom units. Referred to as the horseshoe plan, the interior uses are configured in a U- shape. The resulting massing creates a monolithic presence along Bellevue Ave E and compared to the other options, is the defining difference of the scheme, along with the secondary differences, the ground floor residential use and entry location.

Option B, a six story structure organized around a day-lit central stair, contains 25 residential units, a mix of studio, one and two bedroom units, and a street level restaurant with spillover sidewalk seating. The applicant refers to this option as the code compliant version. The massing provides a strong street presence and corner bay window projections to the east and south gives additional interest. Centered in the lot, the building setbacks should allow for pedestrian views through site to the Space Needle & Olympic Mountains beyond.

Option C, the preferred option, resembles Option B and contains 24 residential units with a greater proportion of two bedroom units. Massing is further refined in this scheme. Relating to the adjacent building heights and the natural topography of the site, the massing steps down to the west. The massing is also shifted to the south, respecting the open space and solar access of the northern neighbor with a limited impact on the building to the south. The applicant notes this north setback increase allows for pedestrian views through site and provides a more generous private residential entry. Larger bay windows create more depth to the façade and articulate the varying setbacks between neighboring buildings. Departures are needed for the required setback encroachments.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comments offered at the meeting included the following:

- Stressed the importance of providing enough space for the smaller neighboring building to the North to access sunlight.
- Appreciated the applicant providing quality materials, but questioned the choice of metal panel.
- Concerned about the viability of the restaurant/ coffee shop space.

SECOND EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE May 27, 2015
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DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Since the first Early Design Guidance meeting, a new applicant is proposing a new design for the site. The applicant has chosen to not proceed with the preferred massing option and has instead chosen to return to the Board for another Early Design Guidance Process.

Prior to the meeting, the applicant provided massing schemes. Each option has similar square footage and proposed uses, containing 45-47 residential units, parking for 16 vehicles in a garage accessed off the alley, and a large roof deck. Massing Alternate One shows a six-story structure configured in a U-shaped plan. The frontage along Bellevue Ave E shows a four story mass at the northeast corner projecting forward while the rest of the façade is stepped back. For this scheme, the massing is pushed to the south, and departures are needed for the required setback encroachments.

Referred to as the code compliant option, Alternate Two showed the massing evenly distributed between the side setbacks. The street facing façade shows no change in setbacks, across the height of the façade, resulting in a monolithic presence along Bellevue Ave E. An open stairs/corridor is proposed along the south facade.

Alternate Three, the preferred option, resembles Alternate One in that a four story mass is also proposed at the northeast corner. For this scheme, the massing is also shifted to the south and departures are needed for the required setback encroachments. Upper levels step back at west, north and east. Compared to the other schemes, a larger upper setback along the north facade respects the open space and solar access of the northern neighbor. At the west façade, the top floor steps back at alley for the amenity area.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were offered at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION May 11, 2016

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were offered at the meeting:

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.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE January 14, 2015

- 1) **Massing Options:** The Board unanimously prefers massing Option C as it respects the open space and solar access of the northern neighbor, and the stepped down massing relates to surrounding development. (CS2.B, CS2-C, CS2.III) The Board directed the applicant to proceed with the preferred option.
 - a. The larger bay window projections provide the best articulation of the façade and announce the commercial entry. The Board deliberated if the bay windows should be located on the northeast or southeast corner of the building. Ultimately, the Board preferred the proposed southeast location, and requested the applicant bring more developed sketches for further study. (DC2-B, DC2-C)
 - b. The amenity space location is desirable, as it shares the best view with all the future tenants. (PL1-C, DC3-C)
- 2) **Uses at Street Level:** The Board unanimously supports the commercial space shown in Options B and C. (Guidelines PL3.I, DC2-C, DC2-D)
 - a. To avoid a vacant street front, the Board suggests designing with adaptability in mind. (PL3.I, DC2-C, DC2-D)
- 3) **Entries:** Related to the uses at street level, the Board deliberated the proposed entry locations and questioned whether or not there should be a front door as this is the pattern in the neighborhood. Ultimately, the Board supported the entries as shown, since the commercial entry activates the south façade which would otherwise have little activity. (PL3.A, PL3.I, DC2-C)
 - a. The Board recommends detailing the store front to provide flexibility for future location of doors. (PL3.A, PL3.I, DC2-C)
- 4) **Materials:** The Board strongly supported the quality of materials proposed, especially the brick, and urged the applicant to consider durability, detailing and color of the materials. (DC4-A, DC4-II)

- a. As part of refining the detailing, the Board would like to see the brick store front façade step forward and the metal panel to recede to provide a strong base. (DC2-B, DC4-A)
 - b. Metal siding is discouraged in the Capital Hill Design Guideline in some cases (DC4-II-i.), and the use of this material warrants additional study. At the next meeting, provide careful detailing and explanation of steps taken to avoid oil canning and/or present workable alternatives.
- 5) For the Recommendation Meeting, the Board specifically asks the applicant provide the following:
- a. Provide more detailed sketches of the bay window location, the pedestrian entry and the commercial entry.
 - b. Study the potential of window locations; provide window mapping of the adjacent properties.
 - c. Provide a materials Board that will be left with the planner.
 - d. Provide a full landscape plan.
 - e. Provide a lighting plan of the site.

SECOND EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE May 27, 2015

- 1) **Massing Options:** The Board approved of the massing Alternate 3 as the stepped façade massing relates to the neighboring buildings and respects the solar access of the northern neighbor. (CS2-B, CS2-C, CS2-III)
- a. Acknowledging the packet showed a lot of specificity, the Board strongly supported the overall design direction, in particular the window design, and directed the applicant to proceed with the preferred option. (CS3-I, DC2)
 - b. Noting that the outdoor amenity space is very narrow, the Board gave guidance to look at the proportion of the amenity space; refine the design to create access to views, light and air. (CS1-B-2, DC3-I)
- 2) **Street Level Uses:** The Board gave direction regarding the street level uses.
- a. The Board was concerned about the bike storage space and directed the applicant to consider access and internal connections for bicyclists when developing the design. (PL4-B-2)
 - b. The Board suggested the applicant consider how the street level uses would provide activation and engagement with the streetscape. Recognizing that the office and lounge spaces make up the larger portion of the ground level street façade, the Board recommended studying the relationship between the office and the lounge to see if there would be a potential for having a space that supports both functions. At the next meeting, the Board would like to see more specific information about these spaces. (PL2-B, PL3-I, DC1-A)

- 3) **Building Entries & Edges:** The Board gave guidance for the design development of the entries and site edges.
 - a. The Board discussed the entry and how the fin relates to the entry sequence and directed the applicant to consider how the fin relates to accent color, suggesting a muted color for this area. (PL3-A, DC4-II)
 - b. The Board was concerned with the proposed fencing surrounding the perimeter of the site and directed the applicant to consider other transitions and/or develop the design and scale well. (PL1-B, PL2-II, DC3-I)

- 4) **Materials:** The Board supported the quality of materials proposed; particularly the four stories of brick wrapping the corner. (Guidelines DC4-A, DC4-II)
 - a. The Board strongly recommended the applicant consider durability, detailing and color of the materials, and stressed that the color of the brick will matter. For accent colors, the Board suggested more muted colors to contribute to the character of the surrounding context. (DC2-B, DC2-C, DC4-A)

RECOMMENDATION May 11, 2016

- 1) **Massing, Architectural Concept and Materials:** The Board supported the overall development of the building frontages and agreed that the articulation of the massing, upper level setback at the roof deck and design development of the facades creates a good transition between the adjacent buildings.
 - a. The Board recognized the upper level setback respects the existing context and the amenity space at this location shares the best view with all the future tenants. The Board also strongly supported the roof deck plan, particularly the paving pattern and the shifted location of trees. (CS2-D, CS2-III, PL1-C, DC3-C)
 - b. For the fiber cement cladding, the Board agreed the grey color gradient which wraps into the open corridors creates an elegant composition. The Board also strongly supported the four stories of brick wrapping the corner. (DC4-A, DC4-II)
 - c. The Board supported the yellow and teal accent colors integrated into the façade yet acknowledged that the proposed gray brick and accent colors appeared monochromatic. The Board stated they would be supportive of either a grey or a red brick, provided that the brick color tone and accent colors complimented each other. The Board agreed the teal accent color was too understated compared to proposed grey brick and recommended a condition to refine the teal to a more vibrant color, one which also compliments the brick color. (DC2-B, DC2-C, DC4-A)
 - d. The Board discussed the fin wall and deliberated whether the element should be extended back and integrated with the façade to avoid a tacked on appearance or be removed entirely. Ultimately the Board did not make this a condition of the project but noted they would support further refinement of the fin wall. (DC2-B, DC2-C, DC4-A)

- 2) **Street Level Uses:** The Board supported the development of the street level uses and appreciated the specific information about the office and lounge spaces. The Board agreed the arrangement of uses, which showed office and support spaces tucked behind the lounge area, addressed their previous guidance to encourage activation and engagement along the street front. (PL2-B, PL3-I, DC1-A)
- 3) **Building Entries Edges and Signage:** The Board discussed the design development of the entries, site edges and signage.
 - a. The Board unanimously supported signage Option 2 as it is integrated with the façade. (DC4-B)
 - b. The Board supported the proposed entry, open corridor and the landscape including the specified trees which serve to create a transition and create focal points for circulation. (PL1-B, PL2-II, DC3-I)

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines identified by the Board as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

CONTEXT & SITE

CS2 Urban Pattern and Form: Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.

CS2-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces

CS2-B-1. Site Characteristics: Allow characteristics of sites to inform the design, especially where the street grid and topography create unusually shaped lots that can add distinction to the building massing.

CS2-B-2. Connection to the Street: Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and public realm.

CS2-B-3. Character of Open Space: Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces.

CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

CS3-I Architectural Concept and Consistency

CS3-I-i. Signage: Incorporate signage that is consistent with the existing or intended character of the building and neighborhood

CS3-I-iv. Materials: Use materials and design that are compatible with the structures in the vicinity if those represent the neighborhood character.

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.

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.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

PL2-II Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances

PL2-II-i. Entryways: Provide entryways that link the building to the surrounding landscape.

PL2-II-ii. Link Open Spaces: Create open spaces at street level that link to the open space of the sidewalk.

PL2-II-iii. Ingress/Egress: Building entrances should emphasize pedestrian ingress and egress as opposed to accommodating vehicles.

PL2-II-iv. Residential Entrances: Minimize the number of residential entrances on commercial streets where non-residential uses are required. Where unavoidable, minimize their impact to the vitality of the retail commercial streetscape.

PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.

PL3-A Entries

PL3-A-1. Design Objectives: Design primary entries to be obvious, identifiable, and distinctive with clear lines of sight and lobbies visually connected to the street.

PL3-A-2. Common Entries: Multi-story residential buildings need to provide privacy and security for residents but also be welcoming and identifiable to visitors.

PL3-A-3. Individual Entries: Ground-related housing should be scaled and detailed appropriately to provide for a more intimate type of entry.

PL3-A-4. Ensemble of Elements: Design the entry as a collection of coordinated elements including the door(s), overhead features, ground surface, landscaping, lighting, and other features.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

PL3-I Human Activity

PL3-I-i. Open Storefronts: Provide for sidewalk retail opportunities and connections by allowing for the opening of the storefront to the street and displaying goods.

PL3-I-ii. Outdoor Seating: Provide for outdoor eating and drinking opportunities on the sidewalk by allowing restaurant or café windows to open to the sidewalk and installing outdoor seating while maintaining pedestrian flow.

PL3-I-iii. Visual Access: Install clear glass windows along the sidewalk to provide visual access into the retail or dining activities that occur inside. Do not block views into the interior spaces with the backs of shelving units or with posters.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

PL3-I Human Activity

PL3-I-i. Open Storefronts: Provide for sidewalk retail opportunities and connections by allowing for the opening of the storefront to the street and displaying goods.

PL3-I-ii. Outdoor Seating: Provide for outdoor eating and drinking opportunities on the sidewalk by allowing restaurant or café windows to open to the sidewalk and installing outdoor seating while maintaining pedestrian flow.

PL3-I-iii. Visual Access: Install clear glass windows along the sidewalk to provide visual access into the retail or dining activities that occur inside. Do not block views into the interior spaces with the backs of shelving units or with posters.

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

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.

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.

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.

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

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

DC3-I Residential Open Space

DC3-I-i. Open Space: Incorporate quasi-public open space with residential development, with special focus on corner landscape treatments and courtyard entries.

DC3-I-ii. Courtyards: Create substantial courtyard-style open space that is visually accessible to the public view.

DC3-I-iii. View Corridors: Set back development where appropriate to preserve view corridors.

DC3-I-iv. Upper-floor Setbacks: Set back upper floors to provide solar access to the sidewalk and/or neighboring properties.

DC3-I-v. Street Trees: Mature street trees have a high value to the neighborhood and departures from development standards that an arborist determines would impair the health of a mature tree are discouraged.

DC3-I-vi. Landscape Materials: Use landscape materials that are sustainable, requiring minimal irrigation or fertilizer.

DC3-I-vii. Porous Paving: Use porous paving materials to enhance design while also minimizing stormwater run-off.

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.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

DC4-II Exterior Finish Materials

DC4-II-i. 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.

1. Use wood shingles or Board and batten siding on residential structures.
2. Avoid wood or metal siding materials on commercial structures.
3. Provide operable windows, especially on storefronts.
4. Use materials that are consistent with the existing or intended neighborhood character, including brick, cast stone, architectural stone, terracotta details, and concrete that incorporates texture and color.
5. Consider each building as a high-quality, long-term addition to the neighborhood; exterior design and materials should exhibit permanence and quality appropriate to the Capitol Hill neighborhood.
6. The use of applied foam ornamentation and EIFS (Exterior Insulation & Finish System) is discouraged, especially on ground level locations

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board’s recommendations on departures are 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.

At the time of the Recommendation meeting, the following departures were requested:

1. **South Side Setback (SMC 23.45.518 B):** The Code requires a 7’ average setback and 5’ minimum for portions of a structure under 42’ in height and a 10’ average setback and 7’ minimum above 42’ in height. The applicant proposes a 6.5’ average and 6’ minimum

setback for levels one through five and a 6.63' average and 6' minimum setback for level six.

The Board unanimously supported the side setback departure since the upper setback shift to the south better respects the solar access of the northern neighbor, with a limited impact on the building to the south. The design better meets Design Guidelines CS2-D Height, Bulk, and Scale and CS2-III Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility.

2. **North Side Setback (SMC 23.45.518 B):** The Code requires a 7' average setback and 5' minimum for portions of a structure under 42' in height. The applicant proposes 8.7' average and 6' minimum setback.

The Board unanimously supported the north side setback departure as the additional upper level setback provided better responds to and respects the existing context. The resulting design responds to the existing context and better meets Design Guidelines CS2-D Height, Bulk, and Scale and CS2-III Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the RECOMMENDATION meeting, the Board recommended approval of the project.

The recommendation summarized above was based on the design review packet dated Wednesday, May 11, 2016, and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the Wednesday, May 11, 2016 Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context and reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, the five Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design and departures the following condition. Applicable Guidelines are noted in parentheses after each condition.

1. **Refine the teal accent color to a more vibrant tone, which also compliments the brick color. (DC2-B, DC2-C, DC4-A)**