



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE SOUTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3018722

Address: 3208 Claremont Ave S

Applicant: Vinh Nguyen and Mark Travers of Mark Travers Architect

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, November 10, 2015

Board Members Present: Drew Hicks, Acting Chair  
Carey Dagliano Holmes  
Charles Romero  
David Sauvion

Board Members Absent: Julian Weber, Recused

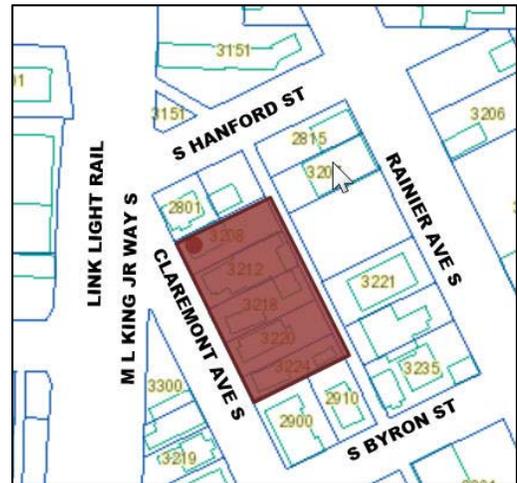
DPD Staff Present: Magda Hogness

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Seattle Mixed (SM-85)

Nearby Zones: Commercial (C3-65, C1-65)  
Neighborhood Commercial (NC3-55),  
Lowrise (LR2, LR2 RC, LR3, LR3 RC),  
Single Family (SF 5000)

Lot Area: 21,600 sq. ft.



### Current Development:

Five single family structures are located onsite, originally constructed between 1900-1965. Vehicular access is located off the alley.

## **Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

The mid-block site is located in the North Rainier Hub Village and the Mount Baker Station Area Overlay District. Surrounding development consists of auto repair shops, multi-family buildings, and single family homes. The neighborhood is in transition with some larger mixed-use, multi-family developments to the north and south. The Mt. Baker Light Rail Station and public plaza area are located three blocks to the northwest.

The North Rainier HUB Urban village plan envisions this area as a new transit oriented town center, with priorities geared toward developing a neighborhood core, creating housing, catalyzing commercial development, offering services, promoting living wage employment opportunities, and offering access to transit and non-motorized travel choices. In the past year, City Council approved an ordinance to rezone land in the North Rainier Hub Urban Village and implement incentive zoning obligations for affordable housing and open space.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposal is for a seven story building containing 147 apartment units, 4 live/work units and parking for 26 vehicles. Existing structures are proposed to be demolished.

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The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3018722) at this website:  
<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/aboutus/news/events/DesignReview/SearchPastReviews/default.aspx>.

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](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following comments were offered at the First Early Design Guidance meeting:

- Supported development in the area.
- Concerned about safety and security.
- Noted that the proposed north corridor, with commercial/retail spaces, appears to have limited visibility.

## 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. Massing and Arrangement of Uses:** The Board recognized this site as very prominent and recommended the applicant explore ways for the proposal to establish a positive and desirable context for others to build upon in the future. The Board deliberated the massing options and the overall scale, arrangement of uses and response to the context. (Guideline CS3-A-4) The Board discussed several of their concerns related to the massing:
  - a. The Board was concerned with the lack of facade modulation and hierarchy shown in the massing options and directed the applicant to develop other massing options. The Board noted that the preferred Massing Alternate 1 is the least successful and could be broken up to provide additional modulation, while Alternate 2 and Alternate 3 show more successful massing modulation. When studying other massing options, the Board also recommended expressing a 2-story plinth to break down the bulk. (Guidelines CS2-B, CS2-C, CS2-D, DC2-A)
  - b. Recognizing that the northwest portion of the site is highly visible, the Board recommended distinguishing the corner with massing and ground level treatment. The Board directed the applicant to explore a massing option which opened up the northwest corner, similar to a flipped version of Massing Alternate 3 with a courtyard accessible from the street to create a pedestrian oriented streetscape. (Guidelines CS2-B, CS2-C, DC2-A)
  - c. Acknowledging that the proposed project does not optimize the arrangement of uses on the site, the Board recommended consideration of future retail to drive program locations and flexibility for these spaces to adapt. The Board also indicated they would not be supportive of a departure to lower the required height of non-residential spaces. (Guidelines PL3, PL3-B-3, DC1-A)
- 2. Architectural Concept and Blank Facades:** The Board discussed the building frontages and blank facades.
  - a. The Board was unanimously concerned with the blank facades and lack of windows shown along the north, south and ground level alley facade and directed the applicant to explore adding modulation, depth and additional transparency in these locations. (Guidelines DC2-B, DC2-C-1)
  - b. The Board recommended maximizing daylight for interior corridors and interior units. (Guideline CS1-B-2)
  - c. Recognizing that the oversized corridors with bike storage constrains exterior building modulation, the Board did not support the bike storage location and recommended the applicant decrease the corridors in width and provide exterior modulation. (Guidelines DC2-B, DC2-C-1)

- 3. Landscape and Streetscape:** The Board was very concerned with the quality of the street level design and gave direction on the landscape and streetscape.
- a. The Board was concerned with the lack of public and amenity space presented and recommended providing open space at the northwest corner as well as more active uses, such as retail, along the open space frontage, to encourage interaction and make a strong connection to the street. (Guidelines CS2-B-2, DC1-A)
  - b. The Board was also concerned with the viability of the commercial and retail spaces and recommended locating these spaces in visible and prominent areas along the street front. (Guidelines PL3, DC1-A)
  - c. The Board directed the applicant to remove the street fencing and provide a strong grade level connection with ample space for pedestrian visibility and circulation. (Guidelines CS2-B-2, PL1-B, PL2-B)

## 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-B Sunlight and Natural Ventilation**

**CS1-B-2. Daylight and Shading:** Maximize daylight for interior and exterior spaces and minimize shading on adjacent sites through the placement and/or design of structures on site.

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

**CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes**

**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.

### 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-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.

**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.

**PL3-B Residential Edges**

**PL3-B-3. Buildings with Live/Work Uses:** Maintain active and transparent facades in the design of live/work residences. Design the first floor so it can be adapted to other commercial use as needed in the future.

**PL3-B-4. Interaction:** Provide opportunities for interaction among residents and neighbors.

**PL3-C Retail Edges**

**PL3-C-1. Porous Edge:** Engage passersby with opportunities to interact visually with the building interior using glazing and transparency. Create multiple entries where possible and make a physical and visual connection between people on the sidewalk and retail activities in the building.

**PL3-C-2. Visibility:** Maximize visibility into the building interior and merchandise displays. Consider fully operational glazed wall-sized doors that can be completely opened to the street, increased height in lobbies, and/or special lighting for displays.

**PL3-C-3. Ancillary Activities:** Allow space for activities such as sidewalk vending, seating, and restaurant dining to occur. Consider setting structures back from the street or incorporating space in the project design into which retail uses can extend.

## 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-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 façades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all façades are attractive and well-proportioned.

**DC2-B-2. Blank Walls:** Avoid large blank walls along visible façades wherever possible. Where expanses of blank walls, retaining walls, or garage façades are unavoidable, include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians.

#### DC2-C Secondary Architectural Features

**DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest:** Add depth to façades where appropriate by incorporating balconies, canopies, awnings, decks, or other secondary elements into the façade design. Add detailing at the street level in order to create interest for the pedestrian and encourage active street life and window shopping (in retail areas).

**DC2-C-2. Dual Purpose Elements:** Consider architectural features that can be dual purpose— adding depth, texture, and scale as well as serving other project functions.

#### DC2-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.

**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.

**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 Meeting no departures were formally requested.

**BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended the project return for another meeting in response to the guidance provided.