



## RECOMMENDATION ADMINISTRATIVE DESIGN REVIEW

Project Number: 3019295

Address: 111 21<sup>ST</sup> Avenue E

Applicant: Robert Humble, HyBrid Architecture

Date: 28 December 2015

DPD Staff: Katy Haima

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Low Rise 3 (LR3)

Nearby Zones: (North) LR3  
(South) LR3  
(East) LR3  
(West) Lr3

Lot Area: 9,537 SF

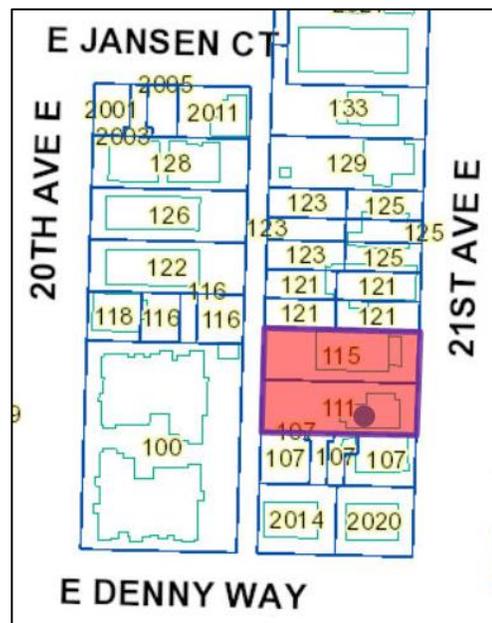
### Current Development:

The site contains two single family structures, both built in in 1910 that are currently occupied as multifamily residences. The site is relatively flat.

### Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The site is located in the Madison-Miller Urban Residential Village, at the eastern edge of Capitol Hill.

The immediate context is a mix of single-family structures from the early to mid-1900's and newer townhouse developments and multifamily residential structures. Structures adjacent to



the site include a three-story townhouse development to the north, a single-family home to the south, a combination of multifamily and single family buildings across the street to the east, and a three-story residential building to the west across the alley.

East Madison Street, to the south of the site, is a mixed-use commercial corridor connection downtown with Lake Washington, and is a main corridor for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicular traffic to downtown. The nearby section of E Madison St. includes several recent mixed-use buildings, including a grocery store.

**Access:**

The subject property has vehicular access to a north-south alley on the west side of the property.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:**

None.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed project includes 73 residential units, no vehicle parking, and 54 bicycle parking spots.

**ADMINISTRATIVE EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE April 22, 2015**

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3019295) 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 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)

**DESIGN DEVELOPMENT**

The applicant provided context for the project, focusing on a study of scale, open space, materials, and front porches from the surrounding neighborhood. Three massing alternatives were presented. Option 1 utilizes an H-shaped layout, pushing the mass towards the front and back of the site, and placing the entries at small interior courtyards located at the north and south of the structure. Option 2 is configured with double-loaded corridors, and subtle

modulation at the northeast and southwest corners of the site to preserve the existing trees. Option 3 (preferred) pushes all of the massing towards the lot boundaries and orients all units around a central courtyard and exterior circulation. The focal point of this scheme is a covered front porch and prominent entry.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

DPD received numerous comment letters. The following comments, issues, and concerns were raised:

- Concerned about the density of the project and the lack of parking.
- Would like to see the design of the building respond to the neighborhood context; this included the typical three-story height, front setbacks, and the overall bulk and scale of the project. Encouraged the applicant to consider the character and context of the neighborhood in the design of the building.
- Not in favor of departures that reduce open space or increase the impact on adjacencies.
- Encouraged a variety of unit types.
- Concerned over the impact of the height and bulk on neighboring properties and the streetscape, especially in regards to light access and privacy.
- Noted a lack of open space, both at the front and sides of the development.
- Desired to see the trees on site preserved.

## **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 April 22, 2015**

- 1. Massing and Architectural Composition:** Reduce the perceived bulk of the building and respond to contextual cues to create a unified design composition that complements the existing neighborhood character.
  - a. Reduce the perceived and comparative bulk of all façades to adjacent structures, through secondary design elements and modulation. Consider revising the design to treat each “section” with a varied, but related design concept or character. (CS2-C, CS2-D, CS3-A, DC2-B)
  - b. The design of the north and south façades should take the window placement of adjacent structures into consideration to preserve privacy impacts. Provide elevations that show a window study of the adjacent structures. (CS2-D)
  - c. The covered porch and entry responds to the contextual cues, and complements the existing urban pattern. (CS2-A, CS3-A, PL3-A)
  - d. Consider a deeper front yard setback to move the building back, provide a streetscape and landscape buffer that is consistent with the adjacent properties, and create an opportunity for useable open space that is integrated with the project. (CS2-A, CS3-A, PL1-A, DC3-C)

- e. Staff supports the preferred option, which retains the two trees on site, which provide a buffer and helps to provide a consistent streetscape. (CS2-A, CS2-D)
- f. Staff supports the intention for a materials palette that relate to the context and that express a level of detail appropriate for reducing the perceived mass. (CS3-A, DC2-C, DC2-D, DC4-A)
- g. The elevator in the courtyard presents a blank wall and appears imposing on the space below. Provide detail as to the intended design treatment of the blank façade. (DC2-B)

**2. East Façade.** Refine the east façade to create a cohesive design composition that is well-proportioned and expresses a scale appropriate for the contextual character.

- a. The lifted base expression reduces the presence and bulk of the structure along the streetscape. However, the top three floors of the building appear quite heavy and out of balance with the base. Consider strategies to further reduce the perceived bulk of the upper floors, and to integrate the base and top of the building into a cohesive composition. This may be achieved through color, materials, or further modulation that unites the street-facing façade. (DC2-A, DC2-B, DC2-C, DC2-D)
- b. Staff supports the transparency and amenity uses at street level to encourage eyes on the street. However, a gracious landscaping buffer should be provided to complement the existing character of the street. (PL2-B, PL3-B, DC1-A, DC1-B)
- c. As presented in the EDG packet, the “notches” appear unrelated and random. Continue to develop the design concept and how the notches add to the overall composition of the façade. Consider redistributing the void spaces to increase the void at the to the entry corner to further open up the porch and allow more light to enter, as well as to provide a more comfortable, usable space. The break in fenestration pattern due to the upper notch draws attention to the height of the building which should be minimized instead. (CS1-B, CS3-A, PL3-A, DC2-B, DC3-B)
- d. As studied in the EDG Packet, consider using secondary architectural elements, such as trim, to further define the first story expression, highlight the porch, and to relate to the neighborhood datum lines. (CS3-A, DC2-A, DC2-B, DC2-C, DC2-D)

**3. Open Space Concept, Landscaping & Amenities.** The overall building-open space relationship needs to be clarified in terms of intent and integration with the structure. As presented in the EDG Packet, the open spaces are broken up throughout the site, creating small exterior spaces. Consider the functionality of each open space, and revise the building massing accordingly. (DC3-A, DC3-B, PL1-A)

- a. Clarify the intended function of the courtyard. Staff is concerned that the lack of direct sunlight and narrow dimensions may not be conducive to active uses. In addition, Staff is concerned with possible noise that could be generated by interior courtyard uses. (CS1-B, PL1-C, DC2-A, DC3-A, DC3-B)
- b. Proposed planting should be suited for the light conditions within the courtyard. (DC4-D)
- c. Utilize design strategies to make the courtyard appear as open and light as possible. This may include light-colored materials, transparent railings, or reflected light. (DC3-A, DC3-B, DC2-D)

- d. Staff supports the concept of the front porch and entry as an appropriate response to contextual cues. Continue to develop the concept, paying particular attention to creating a gracious and welcoming space and integrating usable space into the overall design concept. Consider further opening up the porch to maximize light exposure and keep sightlines into courtyard. In addition, consider integrating the ramp into the open space concept. (CS3-A, PL1-A, PL1-B, PL1-C, PL2-B, PL3-A, PL4-A, DC3-B)
- e. Provide more information regarding landscaping and screening. (PL3-B, DC4-D)
- f. Provide lighting scheme for courtyard and/or covered porch. (PL2-B, DC4-C)
- g. Consider providing double decker bicycle parking to maximize convenient locations. (PL4-B)

**4. Basement Units.** The massing and organization of the building should consider the access to light, security and privacy of the basement units. The basement units should be designed for maximum daylight and should be respectful to adjacent sites.

- a. Provide more detail regarding the basement units. At the next phase, submit sections and details regarding screening, fencing landscaping, and lighting elements. Consider increasing the functionality and openness of the basement units through terracing, lighting, or landscaping. (CS1-B, DC3-A, DC3-B, CS2-D, DC4-C, DC4-D)

**FINAL RECOMMENDATION: December 28, 2015**

**DESIGN DEVELOPMENT**

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[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).

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**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**PRIORITIES & STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS: DECEMBER 28, 2015**

The proposed design resolves most of the major concerns raised at EDG. The proposed massing has been dramatically reduced resulting in a form that is sensitive to the context, and the architectural composition effectively breaks down the bulk and scale of the structure. The design is attractive and contemporary, and responds to contextual cues in a manner that imparts a residential character, relates to the scale of the context, and respects the neighborhood character.

### **1. Context Response & Architectural Composition.**

- a. Staff supports the reduction of the front mass to three stories, as it relates to the datum line established by the adjacent structures and better relates to the streetscape by reducing the bulk of the east façade. (CS2.C, CS2.D, CS3.A, DC2.B)
- b. Varying the design language and materiality of each section of massing breaks down the bulk of each façade, and relates to the scale of existing residential structures in the neighborhood. (CS2.C, CS2.D, CS3.A, DC2.B)
- c. The material palette, including lap siding and wood, is appropriately scaled for the project, and expresses a residential character that complements the established context. (CS3.A, DC2.D, DC4.A)
- d. The increased front yard setback is consistent with the adjacent properties, and responds to the established character of the streetscape by retaining an existing tree and incorporating a gracious landscaped buffer and raised planters. (CS2.A, CS3.A, PL1.A, DC3.C)

### **2. Design Concept.**

- a. The proportions of the base, middle and top have been resolved through the execution of the lifted base expression. The white vertical elements successfully unite the composition while reinforcing the concept of separate, but overlapping elements. (DC2.A, DC2.B)
- b. The design language of the fenestration pattern is simple yet playful, and adds an appropriate level of visual interest for the site and context. The facades appear unified and well-composed across the massing. (CS3.A, DC2.B, DC2.C, DC2.D)
- c. The concepts shown at EDG included a bold application of the accent color at the entry soffit and upper notch, which defined the design theme and provided a unifying feature across the façade. While the restrained application of the accent color has resulted in a more subdued expression appropriate for the residential context, the playfulness and use of the accent color to emphasize the entry has been lost. Reincorporate the expression of the design concept into the entry in a judicious application of color that strengthens the overall design concept and creates a prominent entry. The entry design should reinforce the massing moves of the two-story entry and front porch. (PL3.A, DC2.B, DC2.C, DC2.D)

### **3. Courtyard and Interior Facades**

- a. The blank wall condition at the elevator tower in the courtyard has been resolved through the use of accent panels that break up the façade and tie into the design concept. (DC2.B)
- b. Staff supports the proposed landscape design and palette that utilizes shade-tolerant species and creates a lush and layered planting area. Consider revising

one of the vine maples to a specimen tree, and including low-intensity uplighting to create a focal point and help frame the deck. (DC3.A, DC3.B, DC3.C, DC4.D)

- c. The lighter tints of grey panel on the interior facades helps the courtyard to feel open and welcoming. (DC3.A, DC3.B, DC2.D)

#### **4. Relationship to Streetscape & Pedestrian Experience.**

- a. The covered porch entry sequence, including the terraced planters and seating, responds to contextual cues and complements the established residential character and creates a strong connection to the streetscape. (CS3.A, PL1.A, PL1.B, PL1.C, PL2.B, PL3.A, PL4.A, DC3.B)
- b. The deeper setback, generous landscaping, and retention of the tree at the northeast corner of the site provides continuity with the established streetscape and complements the siting patterns of neighboring buildings. (CS2.A, CS2.C, CS2.D, CS3.A, PL1.A, PL1.C, PL3.A, PL3.B, DC2.A, DC3.A)

## **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.

**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-C Relationship to the Block**

**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-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-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.

**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-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-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.

**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-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-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.

**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-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists**

**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-C Planning Ahead For Transit**

**DESIGN CONCEPT**

**DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.**

**DC1-A Arrangement of Interior Uses**

**DC1-A-2. Gathering Places:** Maximize the use of any interior or exterior gathering spaces.

**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-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-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-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-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.

## **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.

**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-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.

#### **DC3-C Design**

**DC3-C-1. Reinforce Existing Open Space:** Where a strong open space concept exists in the neighborhood, reinforce existing character and patterns of street tree planting, buffers or treatment of topographic changes. Where no strong patterns exist, initiate a strong open space concept that other projects can build upon in the future.

### **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-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.

### **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

Staff's recommendation was based upon the departures' potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departures.

At the time of the Recommendation Phase the following departure was requested:

1. **Rear Setback (SMC 23.45.518):** The Code requires a 10' minimum rear setback. The applicant proposes a 7'-6" rear setback.

Staff recommends approval of the departure. Shifting the entire structure towards the alley allows for a deeper front yard setback that is more consistent with the neighboring buildings, and provides an opportunity for more usable open space and larger planting area along the streetscape. In addition, shifting the building towards the rear reduces the perceived bulk along the streetscape. (CS2.A, CS2.C, CS3.A, PL1.A, DC3.C)

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**The recommendation summarized above was based on the design review packet dated October 23, 2015, and the materials board submitted with the packet. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, Staff recommended APPROVAL of the project design with the following condition.**

- 1. Work with the Land Use Planner to reincorporate the playful design elements used in the original concept to emphasize the entry and provide a keystone for the overall design concept. (See page 6.)**