



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE SOUTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3019452

Address: 6901 M L King Jr Way S

Applicant: Hui Tian and Jeff Walls of Studio 19 Architects

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, September 29, 2015

Board Members Present: Julian Weber, Chair  
Carley Dagliano-Holmes  
Charles Romero  
David Sauvion  
Drew Hicks

DPD Staff Present: Magda Hogness for Katy Haima

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: The site is zoned Neighborhood Commercial (NC3P-85) and is located in the MLK at Holly St Residential Urban Village and Othello St Station Area Overlay District.

Nearby Zones: North of the site, blocks are zoned Commercial (C1-40). West of the site, blocks are zoned Lowrise (LR3). Blocks east of the site are zoned Lowrise (LR2) and Single Family (SF 5000).

Lot Area: 18,431 sf



### **Current Development:**

A one story, wood frame building currently exist on the site. Originally constructed in 1957, the structure is currently vacant.

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

The Othello Neighborhood is evolving into a vibrant commercial and residential community. This neighborhood contains diverse uses; smaller-scale residential buildings to the north and east, a Sound Transit traction power substation facility to the south; a horticultural nursery business to the east; and commercial uses to the north and south.

The development immediately surrounding the project site generally consists of auto oriented commercial structures with surface parking. The neighborhood is evolving with blocks of significant residential and commercial development. Located across M L King Jr Way S, a six-story mixed-use structure containing 103-110 affordable housing units, is proposed under project number 3018112. The site is situated in an area that is moderately pedestrian and transit oriented due to its proximity of bus transit and light rail along M L King Jr Way S.

### **Access:**

Existing vehicular access is from M L King Jr Way S. The adjacent 39th Ave S is currently unimproved.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicant is proposing a seven story mixed use building containing 130 unit apartment building with ground floor retail. Parking for 100 vehicles will be located below grade.

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The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3019452) 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:

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**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 EDG meeting:

- Appreciated that the developer met with the community.
- The site is perceived as a gateway in the community; would like to see something at the corner that is identifiable.
- Supported the proposed brick material at the ground floors.
- Stressed the importance of avoiding shiny materials as cladding.
- Supported the preferred scheme.
- Supported the retail plaza opening up on M L King Jr Way S Way.
- Concerned about the minimal 5' south setback and the limited amount of windows.
- Would like to see townhouses proposed along Willow St instead of live work units, even if a departure is required.
- Concerned about the viability of the smaller residential plaza space.
- Would like to see less parking.
- Encouraged flexibility for the retail spaces to adapt over time.
- Would like to see a super energy efficient building.
- Supported the proposed p-patch on the roof.
- Supported the retail plaza's horizontal and vertical landscaping and would like to see a feature that would draw people in, such as art and/or a water feature.
- Encouraged thoughtful design of the retail plaza to make it accessible, inviting and safe.
- Vertical green walls are a slick feature; would rather see a material application that is more experimental around the whole façade.
- Concerned about the spillover effects of parking.
- Concerned about the parking entry location, would like to see safety and security addressed.

## 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 & Relationship to Context:** The Board deliberated the massing options and discussed the overall scale and response to the context. The Board unanimously supported the third massing option “the H” since the framework of the massing expression, with refinements, has the best potential to provide architectural presence and daylight for the interior spaces. The majority of the Board directed the applicant to proceed with the preferred massing, provided that articulation along the north, west and south facades of the building are further developed. (Guidelines CS2-B, CS2-III, DC2)
  - a. The Board recognized that the site is perceived as a gateway by the community and directed the applicant to provide more articulation of the corner. To address the visually prominent corner, the Board recommended distinguishing the corner

with differentiated massing, material treatment and a two story base expression that wraps the north facade. (Guidelines CS2-III, DC2-A, DC2-B, DC4-A)

- 2) **Architectural Concept & Frontages.** Recognizing that the project is charged with setting the tone for the neighborhood, the Board gave direction on the frontages and architectural concept.
  - a. The Board was concerned about the lack of modulation shown along the north and west façade and directed the applicant to thoughtfully consider the bulk and scale to create pedestrian oriented streetscapes along all street frontages. (Guidelines CS2-B, DC2-A, DC2-B, DC2-C, DC2-D)
  - b. The Board was also concerned about the south façade, the 5' south setback and the lack of modulation shown. The Board recommended expanding the south setback to allow for more windows and eroding the massing for visual interest. (Guidelines CS2-B, DC2-A, DC2-B, DC2-C, DC2-D)
  
- 3) **Courtyard and Landscape.** The Board supported the courtyard location and recommended that the street level landscaping enhance the pedestrian environment. (Guidelines DC3-A, DC3-B)
  - a. The Board supported the retail plaza location fronting off M L King Jr Way S since the location allows for the opportunity to activate the street edge. The Board expressed concern about the proportions of the residential plaza to support the functions of the development. The design of the residential courtyard space should maximize usable space for residents. The Board recommended further studying and developing the proportions of the plazas. (Guidelines DC3-A, DC3-B)
  - b. Acknowledging that the shadow study demonstrates the courtyard spaces will be in shade for the majority of the time, the Board questioned the viability of the planting. For the next meeting, provide a more detailed landscape plan which addresses the viability of vertical planting in shade. (Guidelines CS1-B, DC3-A)
  
- 4) **Street Level Uses & Transitions:** The Board recommended the design respond to the different characters of each street frontage and gave direction on the proposal's edges and transitions. (Guidelines CS2-B, PL1)
  - a. For the retail frontage along M L King Jr Way S, the Board noted that the landscape plan showing modulation is more successful than the preferred floor plan. The Board urged the applicant to further develop and create articulation and setbacks for the retail spaces. (Guidelines PL3-C, PL3-II, PI3-III)
  - b. Recognizing the importance of the southwest corner treatment, the Board recommended a two story expression along the corner and Willow St, to create pedestrian oriented streetscapes, whether or not the ground floor uses continue to be live/work units or if a townhouse use is explored. (Guidelines CS2-III, PL3-C, PL3-II, PI3-III))
  - c. The Board was concerned with the narrow outdoor space at the south setback location and directed the applicant to develop a thoughtful treatment and

consider including patio spaces to create defensible open areas along this perimeter. (Guidelines PL3-III, DC3-A, DC3-B)

- 5) **Materials:** The Board supported the brick materials proposed at the street levels and urged the applicant to consider durability and detailing of the materials. Recognizing the vertical landscape as a compelling feature, the Board would like to see the concept and execution translated into the architectural expression of the building as a whole. (Guidelines DC2-B, DC4-A, DC4-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

**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-1. Sun and Wind:** Take advantage of solar exposure and natural ventilation. Use local wind patterns and solar gain to reduce the need for mechanical ventilation and heating where possible.

**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.

**CS1-B-3. Managing Solar Gain:** Manage direct sunlight falling on south and west facing facades through shading devices and existing or newly planted trees.

**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.**

#### ***Othello Supplemental Guidance:***

#### **CS2-I Streetscape Compatibility**

**CS2-I-i. Commercial Sidewalk Edge:** Building spaces for commercial use at or near the edge of the sidewalk and limiting vertical grade separations is encouraged where commercial uses occupy the street-level floor.

**CS2-I-ii. Shallow setbacks:** Encouraged between the first floor and the sidewalk where residential uses occupy the ground floor; this will promote privacy and also accommodate entry porches and stoops.

#### **CS2-III Corner Lots**

**CS2-III-i. Gateways:** Consider siting and designing structures on corner lots to take advantage of their role as gateways and activity nodes in the community. Locating open spaces such as plazas for public use can promote a physical and visual connection to the street.

**CS2-III-ii. Focal Element:** Consider adding a focal element, for instance, a sculpture or civic art piece to outdoor space. Consider building on current public art themes in the neighborhood, including a kiosk for the use of the community.

**CS2-III-iii. Strong Building Forms:** Employ strong building forms to demarcate important gateways, intersections, and street corners. Strong corner massing can function as a visual anchor for a block.

## PUBLIC LIFE

### **PL1 Connectivity: Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.**

#### **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.

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

#### **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.

#### ***Othello Supplemental Guidance:***

#### **PL3-II Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances**

**PL3-II-i. Activate the Street Edge:** Providing space for intermingling of pedestrians and shoppers at the street-level on Martin Luther King Jr. Way South will help create a socially and visually stimulating MLK@Holly business district. Multiple storefronts, shop entrances and activities enliven the street and provide a safe pedestrian environment. Generous windows placed at the ground floor give people inside an awareness of activity on the street. This is commonly referred to as “eyes on the street,” and supports an active day and night street environment.

**PL3-II-ii. Active Entries:** Buildings that are designed for multi-tenant occupancy and walk-in pedestrian traffic at the street level are encouraged.

**PL3-III Transition Between Residence and Street**

**PL3-III-i. Ground-related Residential Development:**, Encouraged at locations along public open spaces such as Othello Park to create human activity along the park and provide for social interaction among residents and neighbors.

**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-A-2. Connections to All Modes:** Site the primary entry in a location that logically relates to building uses and clearly connects all major points of access.

**PL4-C-3. Transit Connections:** Where no transit stops are on or adjacent to the site, identify where the nearest transit stops and pedestrian routes are and include design features and connections within the project design as appropriate.

**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-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 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-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-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.

**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.

***Othello Supplemental Guidance:***

**DC4-I Exterior Finish Materials**

**DC4-I-i. Encourage High-Quality Construction:** All new buildings are encouraged to be constructed as long-term additions to the urban fabric.

**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 Early Design Guidance no departures were requested.

**BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application.