



City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

DESIGN
REVIEW

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3019495

Address: 4516 Union Bay Pl NE

Applicant: Thomas Hemba, Encore Architects

Date of Meeting: Monday, July 06, 2015

Board Members Present: Ivana Begley (Chair)
Laura Lenss
Blake Williams
Eric Blank

Board Members Absent: Julia Levitt

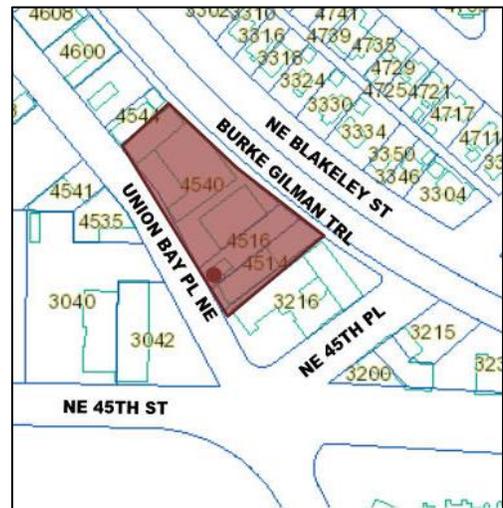
DPD Staff Present: Katy Haima

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: C2-40

Nearby Zones: (Northwest) C2-40
(Northeast) SF 5000
(Southwest) C2-65
(Southeast) NC2-40

Lot Area: 26,790 square feet



Current Development:

The site is currently developed with a one-story covered parking lot, two-story commercial building, one story auto-repair garage, and small surface parking area along Union Bay Pl.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

Union Bay Place is currently a mix of low scale one and two story buildings and parking lots. Sidewalks are lacking along much of Union Bay Place NE.

The site slopes up from Union Bay Place NE to the northeast, with approximately a 10 foot elevation change leading to a steep slope at the northeast portion of the site. At the top of this slope, adjacent to the site, is the Burke Gilman Trail. Currently, only half of the alley has been improved, along which a concrete retaining wall has been constructed.

To the north of the site is a two-story medical office. To the south of the site is a four-story medical/dental office. Across Union Bay Place to the southwest is a one-story retail structure with surface parking. University of Washington play fields are located south of the site, across NE 45th Street. A grocery store and University Village Shopping Center are located in the vicinity to the west of the site.

Access:

The site is accessed via three curb cuts along Union Bay Place NE, as well as from the adjacent alley to the northeast. The alley right-of-way is largely unimproved, and the developed portion of the alley dead-ends midway.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

Steep slope, peat settlement prone, landfill.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a five-story mixed use building with approximately 60 residential units, 3,500 square feet of ground-level commercial, and 115 parking stalls, both below grade and within the structure above grade.

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The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (30194953019495) at this website:
http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp.

The packet is also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

Mailing Public Resource Center

Address: 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000

P.O. Box 34019

Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The applicant provided context for the project, noting the pedestrian designation along NE 45th Street, the proximity of the Burke-Gilman Trail, and the lack of positive design cues in the immediate vicinity. The applicant introduced the project as a “parking garage with neighborhood friendly uses,” and indicated that the proposed parking is to be utilized by the adjacent medical offices. To this end, the applicant explained that a goal of the project is to set an architectural precedent for the Union Bay corridor.

The applicant presented three massing options at EDG. All three schemes utilize ground-floor commercial and lobby spaces along Union Bay PI NE as an intervening use to the structured parking on levels 1 and 2. Bike access for all three schemes is taken from the alley.

Option 1 utilizes a two-story podium and C-shaped massing of the upper levels. The courtyard is located on the third level, along the southeast boundary, partially at the street edge. This option locates the lobby in the middle of the commercial spaces along Union Bay. Access to parking is taken from the alley only.

Option 2 unites the street-facing façade into a single plane, and encloses the third-level courtyard. The lobby is located in between two retail spaces. Access is proposed from both the alley and a curb cut on Union Bay PI NE at the north end of the site.

Option 3 features a recessed second story that creates a one-story base and a three-story mass above. The upper massing is roughly C-shaped, allowing views from the third-level courtyard to the Burke Gilman Trail. Vertical bays along the street-facing façade are angled and stepped. The lobby is located on the south end, allowing for a larger commercial space. Access is proposed from both the alley and the street.

The applicant noted that while a direct connection to the Burke Gilman Trail could be desirable, the location of the alley and steep slope present a significant challenge.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following comments, issues and concerns were raised at the Early Design Guidance Meeting:

- Would like to see direct connection to the Burke Gilman Trail to Union Bay Place NE.

- Appreciated the applicant’s rationale for locating parking entrance on Union Bay Place, and encouraged applicant to consider closing parking access from the street after office hours.
- Encouraged more apartment units, and fewer parking stalls, noting that the site was appropriate for higher density uses.
- Concerned about view impacts from the Burke Gilman Trail and residences to the northeast. Encouraged the applicant to consider the design of the rear façade.
- Concerned that not providing direct trail access would result in increased traffic on NE Blakely, which is narrow and lacking sidewalks.
- Concerned that charging for parking may result in more on street parking.
- Desired a more clear section of the project and the context, including the steep slope and NE Blakely Street.
- Expressed desire to see the grade change as an opportunity for the project design.
- Concerned about overflow traffic and parking on NE Blakely.
- Would like to see more detail regarding the design of the courtyard.
- Noted the existing stair access, and encouraged the applicant to consider a pedestrian connection from Blakely to Union Bay Place NE.

<p>PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS</p>
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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 Context Response:

- a. The Board supported the massing presented in Option 3 as an appropriate response to site characteristics and context, and encouraged the applicant to further explore how the programming of the building can be expressed in the massing. (CS1-C, C2-B, CS2-D, DC2-A)
- b. The Board preferred the location of the upper level courtyard and massing of Option 3, as it allows for sun access, provides a visual connection to the Burke Gilman Trail corridor, and retains a strong street edge along Union Bay Place NE. (CS1-B, PL1-C, DC3-A, DC3-B)
- c. The Board requested more information regarding the design of the courtyard. (DC3-A, DC3-B, DC3-C, DC4-D)
- d. A pedestrian connection from Blakely would be supported, but the Board recognized the difficulty of achieving this due to the location of the right-of-way and the significant elevation change. If this is pursued, the Board suggested locating this connection towards the west side of the site. (PL1-A, PL1-B)
- e. The design of the north façade should respond to potential development that could occur on the adjacent parcel. The Board expressed concern that locating patio spaces on this façade could create privacy concerns. (CS2-B, CS2-D)

2. Architectural Composition:

- a. The Board supported the design concept of a one-story base and floating three-story mass above, and the clear articulation of a base, middle, and top. (DC2-A, DC2-B)
 - b. Demonstrate how the materials respond to the design concept, for each façade. (DC2-B)
 - c. The northeast façade will be visible the Burke-Gilman Trail and NE Blakely Street. Provide more information, including sections and perspectives from these locations, and design the façade appropriately. (CS2-B, DC2-B)
 - d. Explore incorporating continuous overhead weather protection, and consider how this relates to the overall design concept. (PL2-C)
 - e. Demonstrate how the units relate to the massing and architectural composition. (DC2-A, DC2-B)
 - f. Provide a conceptual signage plan, especially in regards to the parking entry. (DC4-B)
3. **Entry:** The Board supported the proposed location of the lobby entry of the preferred alternative; however, they expressed that the entry should be clearly articulated and reinforced through the overall massing and architectural composition. (PL3-A, PL4-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.

CS1-C Topography

CS1-C-1. Land Form: Use natural topography and desirable landforms to inform project design.

CS1-C-2. Elevation Changes: Use the existing site topography when locating structures and open spaces on the 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-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.

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.

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-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.

PL2-C Weather Protection

PL2-C-1. Locations and Coverage: Overhead weather protection is encouraged and should be located at or near uses that generate pedestrian activity such as entries, retail uses, and transit stops.

PL2-C-2. Design Integration: Integrate weather protection, gutters and downspouts into the design of the structure as a whole, and ensure that it also relates well to neighboring buildings in design, coverage, or other features.

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.

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-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.

PL4-B-3. Bike Connections: Facilitate connections to bicycle trails and infrastructure around and beyond the project.

DESIGN CONCEPT

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

DC1-B Vehicular Access and Circulation

DC1-B-1. Access Location and Design: Choose locations for vehicular access, service uses, and delivery areas that minimize conflict between vehicles and non-motorists wherever possible. Emphasize use of the sidewalk for pedestrians, and create safe and attractive conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.

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-1. Below-Grade Parking: Locate parking below grade wherever possible. Where a surface parking lot is the only alternative, locate the parking in rear or side yards, or on lower or less visible portions of the site.

DC1-C-2. Visual Impacts: Reduce the visual impacts of parking lots, parking structures, entrances, and related signs and equipment as much as possible.

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.

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-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-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.

DC3-C-2. Amenities/Features: Create attractive outdoor spaces suited to the uses envisioned for the project.

DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.

DC4-B Signage

DC4-B-1. Scale and Character: Add interest to the streetscape with exterior signs and attachments that are appropriate in scale and character to the project and its environs.

DC4-B-2. Coordination with Project Design: Develop a signage plan within the context of architectural and open space concepts, and coordinate the details with façade design, lighting, and other project features to complement the project as a whole, in addition to the surrounding context.

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.

DC4-D-2. Hardscape Materials: Use exterior courtyards, plazas, and other hard surfaced areas as an opportunity to add color, texture, and/or pattern and enliven public areas through the use of distinctive and durable paving materials. Use permeable materials wherever possible.

DC4-D-3. Long Range Planning: Select plants that upon maturity will be of appropriate size, scale, and shape to contribute to the site as intended.

DC4-D-4. Place Making: Create a landscape design that helps define spaces with significant elements such as trees.

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 Early Design Guidance the following departures were requested:

1. **Access to Parking (23.47A.032.A.3):** The Code requires structures in Commercial zones with residential uses to meet the requirements of parking access for NC zones. SMC 247A.032A.1.a requires that access to parking in NC zones shall be from the alley if the lot abuts an alley. The applicant proposes taking access from the alley and from a curb cut on Union Bay Place NE.

The Board acknowledged that the lack of visibility of the alley may present a wayfinding challenge to direct parking for the adjacent medical office buildings towards the alley. After discussing the potential impacts on the design of the streetscape and pedestrian experience of the proposed departure, the Board indicated that they would be open to considering the departure if more information is provided by the applicant. At the Recommendation Meeting, the applicant should provide studies and graphics demonstrating how the departure would impact the streetscape and pedestrian experience; how retail users get from the parking to the retail uses, lobby, and adjacent structures; and how the parking entry interfaces with the adjacent property to the north. (PL2-B, PL4-A, DC1-B, DC1-C)

BOARD DIRECTION

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