City of Seattle

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

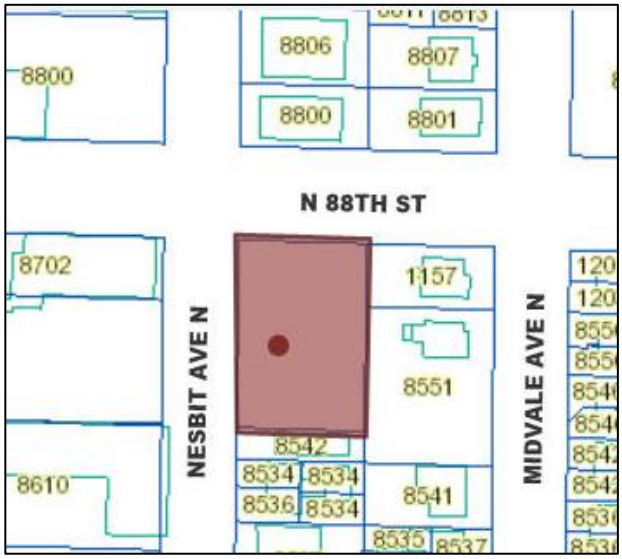
DESIGN REVIEW

SECOND EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number:	3019553
Address:	1141 N 88th Street
Applicant:	David Maul, RMA Architects
Date of Meeting:	Monday, September 28, 2015
Board Members Present:	Ellen Cecil (Chair) Chris Bell Joe Giampietro (substitute)
Board Members Absent:	Dale Kutzera Marc Angelilo Keith Walzak
DPD Staff Present:	Carly Guillory (for Katy Haima)

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone:	Lowrise 3 (LR3)
Nearby Zones:	(North) LR3 (South) LR3 (East) LR3 (West) C1-65
Lot Area:	15,822 SF



Current Development:

The site is currently vacant.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The site is located within the Aurora-Licton Urban Village. The auto-oriented commercial corridor along Aurora Ave N is one block to the west. Many sites on the surrounding blocks have been redeveloped in recent years with 2-3 story townhomes; some duplexes and single family homes are still present.

Across Nesbit Ave N to the east is a two-story commercial structure and an unpaved parking lot. To the east of the site is a 3 story townhouse. To the south of the site is a three-story duplex.

The site is relatively flat, with approximately 2ft of grade change.

Access:

The site has an existing curb cut along N 88th Street. There is no alley access.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

None.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a four-story apartment building with approximately 38 small efficiency dwelling units and 38 apartment units. No parking is proposed.

FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE February 13, 2014

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3019553) 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 Address: **Public Resource Center**
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, focusing on the recent redevelopment of townhouses in the surrounding blocks, and the proximity of the amenities along Aurora Ave.

The applicant presented three massing options at the EDG Meeting. Option A utilizes stacked units in a c-shaped building, locating a ground-floor courtyard along Nesbit Ave N. Option B encloses the courtyard with another bank of units. Option C also incorporates an enclosed courtyard, and differentiates the floorplate at each level by stacking the units in varied directions. All three options are designed to utilize modular construction, and have open stairs and walkways, with no main lobby entry. In addition, all options locate a dog run and access to basement bike parking on the eastern edge of the site.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Concerned about the density of the project and the lack of parking.
- Noted security issues in the neighborhood, and encouraged the applicant to carefully consider security in the design of the project.
- Supported the roof deck, but concerned about the location and potential noise impacts on adjacent properties.
- Encouraged a variety of unit types, as opposed to all small efficiency dwelling units.
- Support for the increase in density and more eyes on the street.

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.

FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE June 1, 2015

1. **Massing and Context Response**
    a. The Board discussed the massing options at length; the majority of the Board present preferred the street-facing open courtyard in Option A as an appropriate response to the residential character of the context, and reduced the bulk of the massing. However, the Board agreed that further design exploration could result in a revised massing concept, and that the design should respond to the corner condition, modular unit construction, security concerns, and adjacent structures. (CS2-B, CS2-D, PL2-B, CS3-A, DC2-A, DC3-C)
    b. The Board agreed that the location of the roof deck (proposed for the southwest corner) should be relocated or revised to reduce potential for noise and privacy impacts to the adjacent neighbor. (CS2-D, PL1-C, DC1-A)

c. The Board was concerned with the location of the dog run at the northeast property edge, and encouraged the applicant to either relocate or provide appropriate buffering to reduce noise and visual impacts on the neighbor to the east. (CS2-D, DC3-A)
d. The arrangement of the modular units should read as intentional and establish well-composed facades. Consider both the exterior of the building as well as the interior facades facing the courtyard. (CS3-A, DC2-D, DC2-B, DC3-A)

2. Open Space Concept & Streetscape

a. The Board preferred the open courtyard in Option A, as it presented an opportunity to establish a usable open space with strong connection with the street and is complementary to the residential character of the neighborhood. (CS1-B, CS2-B, CS3-A, PL1-A, PL1-C, DC3-B, DC3-C)
b. The Board was concerned that enclosing the courtyard would not provide adequate sunlight to be an inviting, comfortable space. The Board also commented on the potential noise and security impacts of an enclosed courtyard and limited sightlines. (CS1-B, PL1-C, PL2-B)
c. The Board requested to see conceptual landscape plans for the streetscape, courtyard, and buffers. (CD3-A, DC3-B, DC4-D)
d. Provide a shadow study for the courtyard, as well as on adjacent structures. (CS1-B, DC2-B)
e. The Board noted that the right-of-way between the sidewalk and the property line is quite wide on the north side of the site, and requested more detail regarding the relationship of the ground-level units to the streetscape. Include sections and elevations that demonstrate how the design is addressing the privacy and security of these units. (PL3-B)
f. The Board supported a high level of visibility from the unit entries to the courtyard and street to encourage natural surveillance. Including courtyard-facing windows and consider the location of blank walls. (PL2-B, DC2-B)

3. Entries & Circulation

a. The Board noted that the proposed design schemes have 4 entries but lack a hierarchy. Although the proposal does not include a residential lobby, a main entry to the site should be integrated into the design to give the project the experience of a front entry. (PL3-A, PL3-B)
b. The Board discussed security concerns in regard to the permeability of the site and the exposed entries, and encouraged the applicant to explore enclosing the stairwells and corridors. (PL2-B, PL3-B)
c. The Board encouraged the applicant to consider the security implications of having entries, and requested more detail regarding how entries would be secured.
d. The entries and courtyard should be designed with security in mind. The Board discussed the opportunity to tie a main entry sequence into the design of the courtyard, and suggested potentially raising the courtyard or using a visually permeable fence to provide a semi-private amenity area while still allowing views in to the space. (DC1-A, DC3-A, DC3-B, PL2-B, PL3-A, PL3-B, PL4-A)

e. The location of access to bicycle parking at the end of a ramp behind the building on the east side of the property is inconvenient to access and presents security concerns Consider relocating the access closer to N 88th Street to improve visibility and provide convenient access. (PL4-A, PL4-B)

SECOND EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE September 28, 2015

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PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment received included:

- Suggested providing a loading stall on site for moving/loading trucks to park on site for residents moving in and out.
- Concerned lack of parking on site.
- Noted that streets are currently parked such that only one car can pass.
- Concerned about impacts to functionality of right-of-way.
- Suggested providing a loading/unloading stall on site for moving trucks.
- Concerned trash trucks will block traffic, including emergency vehicles.
- Concerned about location of trash for pick up.
- Concerned proposal is one large mass. Suggested further modulation and articulation.

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.

SECOND EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE September 28, 2015

1. **Site Planning and Public Realm**: The Board agreed that providing a strong connection to the street and public realm are a top priority (CS2-B, PL2-B, PL3-B, DC1-A, DC3-A).

a. The Board expressed concern that the fencing along the street frontages would not activate the street. Instead, the Board recommended the ground floor units have direct access to the street to activate the streetscape and improve security. The Board requested detailed images illustrating the response to the streetscape. (PL2-B, PL3-B)
b. The Board discussed the proposed location of the solid waste storage area in the basement and the ramp up to the street. The Board was concerned that this location could result in the trash being stored at the street. (DC1-C)
c. The Board recommended moving the solid waste storage area to a location on site that is closer to the street and as far from the residential development to the east. Locating the solid waste area closer west to Aurora was preferred. (DC1-C)
d. The Board was concerned about the safety of the access ramp at the east property line and requested additional information describing how this area will be secured. (PL2-B)
e. The Board agreed that locating a stair penthouse at the east parapet contributed to the overall perceived height, bulk, and scale. The Board recommended exploration of moving the stairway to the west along Nesbit Ave N. (DC2-A)
f. The Board supported an open stair concept at the street, and recommended the fence be non-climbable at the first and second levels. (PL2-B, DC2-A)
g. The Board requested additional information describing the proposed fencing, and recommended that fences be designed such that they can be seen through or over to improve safety (CS2-B).
h. The Board discussed the functionality of the site relative to residents loading and unloading. The Board recommended exploration of obtaining a designated loading/unloading on-street parking space near the main entrance. (DC1-C)

2. **Architectural Concept: T**he Board supported the conceptual architectural concept of the preferred option, finding the forms to result in a reasonable solution. (CS1-B, CS2-B, CS2-D, DC2-A)
    a. The Board supported the modulated unit concept and recommended further exploration of modulation as it pertains to the massing (DC2-A, DC2-B).
    b. The entry locations to the site were supported by the Board (PL3-A).
    c. The Board described the mass as having many commercial elements with domestic or residential rooflines. While the Board supported the conceptual architectural concept, they recommended that all building facades be designed considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. (DC2-B, DC2-C, DC2-D)

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-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces

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-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-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-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-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-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.

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.
PL3-B-2. Ground-level Residential: Privacy and security issues are particularly important in buildings with ground-level housing, both at entries and where windows are located overlooking the street.

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-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-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.

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-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.

DC2-C Secondary Architectural Features

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

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-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.

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-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-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.

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 **SECOND** Early Design Guidance no departures were requested.

BOARD DIRECTION

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