



# City of Seattle

Department of Construction and Inspections  
Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN  
REVIEW

## FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE SOUTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3019955

Address: 2912 Beacon Avenue South

Applicant: Paul Casey, Casey + DeChant Architects

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, March 22, 2016

Board Members Present: Julian Weber (Chair)  
Carey Dagliano Holmes  
Drew Hicks  
Charles Romero  
David Sauvion

Board Members Absent: None

SDCI Staff Present: Crystal Torres  
Shelley Bolser

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: NC2P-40

Nearby Zones: (North) SF 5000  
(South) LR2  
(East) NC2-40 and SF 5000  
(West) NC2-40 and NC1P-40

Lot Area: 5,712 SF



### **Current Development:**

The midblock site currently contains 3 single family homes and a parking lot.

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

The site is located south of the intersection of South Beacon Avenue and South Forest Street within the North Beacon Hill Residential Urban Village and Beacon Hill Family Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan. The site located near the Beacon Hill Station, Beacon Hill Library, and historic Beacon Hill First Baptist Church. The project site consists of 3 tax parcels situated as a through block site. One tax parcel fronts the Beacon Avenue South commercial corridor and the two east parcels front 18th Avenue South. Across 18th Avenue South, the zoning changes from Neighborhood Commercial (40' height) to Single Family (30' height). As such, there are two distinct characters on each frontage; an evolving commercial corridor along Beacon Avenue South and an established single family neighborhood across 18th Avenue South. The surrounding architectural character includes a mix of 1-2 story craftsman style single family homes and 3-4 story turn-of-the century traditional brick apartment buildings. New development along Beacon Avenue consists of mixed use building with commercial spaces along the ground floor and residential.

### **Access:**

Existing vehicular access is from both Beacon Avenue South and 18th Avenue South. The proposed plan will include 23 below-grade parking spaces with access along 18th Avenue South.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The application is for a 4 story structure containing 72 residential units above 1100 square feet of commercial space. Parking for 24 vehicles and 23 bike stalls to be provided below grade. Existing structures to be demolished.

The design packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number 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 SDCl:

**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)

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### PUBLIC COMMENT

- Concerned with the proposed size of the commercial spaces. Suggested one larger space in lieu of two smaller commercial tenants or constructing the commercial space to allow for flexibility of two separate space or a combined larger space.
- Concerned with the bulk and scale of the proposed massing, specifically along the 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue South frontage. Suggested eroded the massing along this street frontage to reduce the bulk and scale and create a more compatible massing.
- Concerned with impacts to the pedestrian and bicycle safety/functionality along 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue South. Suggested minimizing the garage entry as much as possible.
- Concerned with the compatibility of the proposed massing with the single family neighborhood across 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue South.
- Concerned with the north edge and proposed setback (from the project for the proposed development to the north located at 2901 Beacon Avenue South).
- Concerned with the 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue South street frontage and massing. Suggested pushing the commercial portion of the building to the minimum setback allowed and provide a greater setback along the 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue South frontage.

All public comments submitted in writing for this project can be viewed using the following link and entering the project number: <http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/edms/>

### 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 March 22, 2016

**1. Height, Bulk, Scale/Massing and Design.** The Board expressed concerns that the applicant had not yet fully explored design and massing solutions which adequately responded to the site conditions and surrounding context. The Board requested that the applicant return for a second EDG and directed the applicant to provide 3 distinct options. The Board offered the following guidance:

- a. The Board directed further development the massing and design of the proposed development to respond to the distinct character along each street frontage. **CS2-I-i**
- b. The Board suggested the applicant explore splitting the massing into two buildings which would allow for more opportunities for light/air access as well as the potential for a courtyard/amenity space. In addition, a two building configuration may create a

better solution to the future development on adjacent properties. **CS2-B-1; CS2-D-2; CS2-III-I; CS2-III-ii**

- c. **(REVISED COMMENT)** The Board recommended pushing the upper residential stories along Beacon Avenue to the street and pulling back to create an increased buffer at grade on Beacon Avenue between the sidewalk and the commercial entries. **PL3-I-i**
- d. The Board encouraged further development of the 18<sup>th</sup> Street façade to create a stronger compatibility with the residential character across the street. Specifically, the Board encouraged the applicant to erode the massing and setting back the upper floors as a means to reducing the bulk and scale. **CS2-D-3; CS2-D-4; CS2-D-5; CS2-III-v; CS2-III-vii, Beacon Hill DC2-I**
- e. Board members expressed concerns with the 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue street façade appearing like too much like the back side of the building. The Board encouraged the applicant to explore a different typology along 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue in order to create a more fluid transition from NC to the single family homes across the street. The Board suggested integrating street entries for the ground floor units; creating “eyes on the street” and improving safety/security. **CS2-D-3; CS2-D-4; CS2-D-5; CS3-A-3; PL2-B-1; PL3-A-2-4; PL3-B-2; Beacon Hill PL3-II**
- f. Board members noted that the articulation of the north and south facades were better articulated in scheme B than in the preferred scheme.

## 2. Commercial Use/Commercial Entry

- a. The Board supported the highly glazed commercial entry and two story gesture and directed the applicant to carry this feature into future iterations. **CS3-A-2; CS3-A-4; PL2-B-3; PL3-C-1-2; Beacon Hill PL3-I**
- b. The Board expressed general support for the articulation of the commercial entry as shown in the provided character sketches with the integration of Board suggestions for the Beacon Avenue South frontage. **Beacon Hill CS3-I-ii; CS3-I-ii**
- c. The Board expressed concerns with the scale of the commercial space in relation to the scale of the building. The Board encouraged the applicant to explore creating larger commercial spaces or designing for a flexible commercial space that could be combined dependent upon the tenant needs. **DC1-A; DC2-E**

**3. Garage Entry/Pedestrian Safety.** The Board directed the applicant to further resolve the garage entry focusing on minimizing sidewalk interrupt and visual impacts, and resolving how solid waste pickup/drop-off would function. **DC1-B; DC1-C; Beacon Hill DC1-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](#).

<b>CONTEXT &amp; SITE</b>
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**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-2. Architectural Presence:** Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly.

**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-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-3. Zone Transitions:** For projects located at the edge of different zones, provide an appropriate transition or complement to the adjacent zone(s). Projects should create a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zone and the proposed development.

**CS2-D-4. Massing Choices:** Strive for a successful transition between zones where a project abuts a less intense zone.

**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.

***North Beacon Hill Supplemental Guidance:***

**CS2-I Streetscape Compatibility**

**CS2-I-i. Buildings with Multiple Street Fronts:** For buildings that span a block and face two streets, each street frontage should receive individual and detailed site planning as well as architectural design treatments to complement the established streetscape character.

**CS2-III Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility**

**CS2-III-i. Separate Mass Volumes:** Break larger (particularly longer) buildings into separate volumes to maintain a compatible scale with smaller commercial buildings nearby.

**CS2-III-ii. Differentiate Facades:** Break up building mass by incorporating different façade treatments to give the impression of multiple, small-scale buildings, in keeping with the established development pattern.

**CS2-III-v. Upper-Level Setbacks:** Step back elevation at upper levels of large-scale development to take advantage of views and increase sunlight at street level.

**CS2-III-vii. Visual Mass Reduction:** Employ architectural measures to reduce building scale such as: landscaping, trellises, complementary materials, detailing and accent trim.

**CS2-III-xi. Zone Buffer:** Locate features, such as required open space, on the zone edge to create further separation and buffering of lower intensive structures.

**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-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.

**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.

**North Beacon Hill Supplemental Guidance:**

**CS3-I Architectural Context**

**CS3-I-i. Facade Articulation:** To make new, larger development compatible with the surrounding architectural context, facade articulation and architectural detail are important considerations in mixed-use and multifamily residential buildings. When larger buildings replace several small buildings, facade articulation should reflect the original platting pattern and reinforce the architectural rhythm established in the commercial core.

**CS3-I-ii. Respond to Local Design:** New development should respond to several architectural features common in the North Beacon Hill business district to preserve and enhance pedestrian orientation and maintain an acceptable level of consistency with the existing architecture. To create cohesiveness on North Beacon Hill, identifiable and exemplary architectural patterns should be reinforced. New elements can be introduced but a strong design connection should accompany it.

**PUBLIC LIFE**

**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-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-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-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.

**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.

***North Beacon Hill Supplemental Guidance:***

**PL3-I Human Activity**

**PL3-I-i. Sidewalk Retail:** Provide for sidewalk retail opportunities and connections by allowing for the opening of the storefront to the street and the display of goods on the sidewalks.

**PL3-I-ii. Outdoor Dining:** Provide for outdoor dining opportunities on the sidewalk by allowing for the opening of restaurant or cafe windows to the sidewalk and installing outdoor seating.

**PL3-I-iii. Visual Access:** Install clear glass windows along the sidewalk to provide visual access into the retail or dining activities that occur inside.

**PL3-I-iv. Transparent Facades:** Do not block views into the interior spaces with the backs of shelving units or posters.

**PL3-I-v. Window Size:** Maximize window widths and heights along sidewalk face of buildings to create an inviting and interactive atmosphere between indoor and outdoor activities.

**PL3-II Streetscape Compatibility**

**PL3-II-i. Entry Porches/Stoops:** Provide a shallow setback and a minor grade separation 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.

## 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.

#### **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-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.

**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.

### ***North Beacon Hill Supplemental Guidance:***

#### **DC1-I Parking and Vehicular Access**

**DC1-I-i. Continuous Sidewalks:** Preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment in residential and commercial areas by providing for continuous sidewalks that are unencumbered by parked vehicles and are minimally interrupted by vehicular access within a block.

**DC1-I-ii. Curb Cuts:** Minimize the number and width of driveways and curb cuts.

### **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-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-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-E Form and Function**

**DC2-E-1. Legibility and Flexibility:** Strive for a balance between building use legibility and flexibility. Design buildings such that their primary functions and uses can be readily determined from the exterior, making the building easy to access and understand. At the same time, design flexibility into the building so that it may remain useful over time even as specific programmatic needs evolve.

#### ***North Beacon Hill Supplemental Guidance:***

##### **DC2-I Respect for Adjacent Sites**

**DC2-I-i. Windows/Decks:** Redirect the number of windows and decks on proposed buildings that overlook neighboring residences.

**DC2-I-ii. Upper-Floor Setbacks:** Step back upper floors or increase side and rear setbacks to pull windows farther away from neighboring residences.

**DC2-I-iii. Window Location:** Stagger windows to not align with adjacent windows and minimize the impact of windows in living spaces that may infringe on the privacy of adjacent residents.

#### **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.

***North Beacon Hill Supplemental Guidance:***

**DC4-I Exterior Finish Materials**

**DC4-I-i. Brick and Stone:** Brick and stone are the most common surface treatment in the commercial areas and are strongly encouraged.

**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 no departures were requested.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**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.