



FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE SOUTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3019962

Address: 4532 42nd Ave SW

Applicant: Steve Fischer, nk Architects

Date of Meeting: Thursday, July 16, 2015

Board Members Present: Donald Caffrey
T Frick McNamara
Alexandra Moravec
Matt Zinski (Chair)

Board Members Absent: Todd Bronk

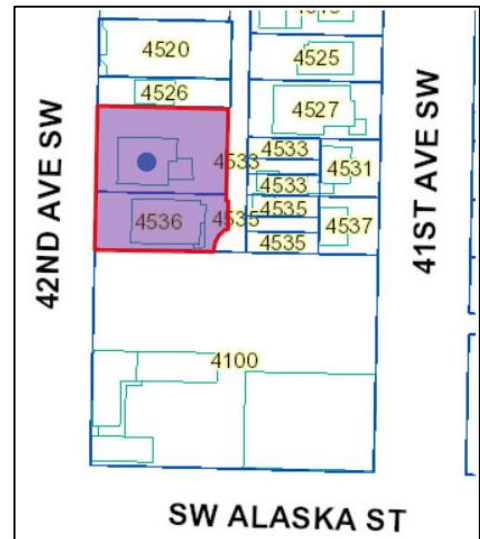
DPD Staff Present: Lisa Rutzick for Katy Haima

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: NC3P-85, NC3-65

Nearby Zones: (North) NC3-65
(South) NC3P-85
(East) LR3
(West) NC3P-85

Lot Area: 13,985 square feet



Current Development:

The site contains a one-story duplex and gravel parking lot. The site slopes from the northwest corner to the southeast, with a grade change of approximately 15 feet.

The site is predominantly zoned NC3-65; however, the southern 25' of the site is zoned NC3P-85.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The site is located in the West Seattle Junction Hub Urban Village, a densely developed area consisting of a variety of building scale and types and a vibrant pedestrian character. Recent development activity includes several large-scale mixed use buildings, including the seven-story Oregon 42 at the north end of the block and seven-story Capco Plaza/Altamira Apartments on the adjacent site to the south of the site.

Directly north of the site is a single family home. Further north is a three story medical office building. Directly across 42nd Avenue SW is a large surface parking lot that provides time-limited parking for visitors of the Junction. To the south of the parking lot is a nine-story multi-family building and the Junction Plaza Park. Across the alley to the east are town homes. A senior home is proposed just north of the townhomes.

Access:

The site is accessed by two curb cuts on 42nd Ave SW, as well as from the alley to the east of the site.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

No designated ECA at this time.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a six-story mixed-use building with approximately 84 dwelling units and 3,400 square feet of ground-level retail and office. Below grade parking is proposed for 70 vehicles.

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The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3019962) 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 anomaly of the single family home to the north, the street wall established by nearby Oregon 42 and Capco Plaza, and the Exceptional Tree on site.

The applicant presented three massing options at EDG. Option 1 preserves the western red cedar by notching the massing along the north edge, and locating the primary landscape area adjacent to the tree. Option 2 includes a private courtyard on level 2 that faces east, breaking up the massing of the upper stories. Option 3 includes a landscaped courtyard on the west facing street façade. Both Options 2 and 3 would require departures from setback requirements, and removal of the western red cedar. All three options take parking access from the alley. In addition, all three options include a residential mezzanine floor in the southern 25' of the site.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Several comments were offered at this meeting:

- Concerned that the living areas of the adjacent house are facing the blank wall of the existing medical building to the north and would like to see greater visual interest on the north elevation of the proposed building. Also expressed concern with the loss of access to southern exposure, light and air.
- Supported the proposed setbacks that were included as part of the previously approved design on the subject site and would like to see the greater setbacks included on the north side to lessen adverse impacts on sunlight access and privacy.
- Supported Option 3 which showed a courtyard, but recommended it be shifted to the north and combined with setbacks to maximize the buffer to the existing house to the north.
- Noted that garage exhaust vents should not be located on the north side.
- Concerned with vehicles navigating the alley and would like to see it changed to a one-way only direction.
- Concerned with the excess of trash cans on the alley that are not put away on non-collection days.
- Supported retention of the existing Western Red Cedar on site, as it provides a natural buffer, helps make a more successful fit with the adjacent property, and contributes to the network of open spaces.
- Felt that continuous retail along 42nd Ave. SW would better enhance the pedestrian experience than a courtyard.

- Consider the setbacks on both the east and west corners of the alley in regards to pedestrian-car conflicts.
- Suggested setting the structure back to match Oregon 42 for continuity and consistency.
- Felt the design should respond and exhibit connectivity to the Junction Plaza Park.
- Suggested relocating the courtyard to the north as a public amenity and mid-block connection, which may present a rationale for the departure request.
- Concerned with the location of the garage exhaust vent on the north side of the proposed structure.

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. Exceptional Tree¹, Massing & Sensitivity to Zone Transition across the Alley.** The Board agreed that the Exceptional Tree located on the site was both in very good health and located close to the property line and thus greater effort should be made to preserve the tree while also achieving a massing that is sensitive to the immediate context. (CS1.B, CS1.D1, CS2.B, CS2.D3, CS2.III, CS2.D5, DC2.A, DC3.A)
 - a. The Board felt that Option One was preferred as it preserved the tree and provided the required rear setback along the alley.
 - b. The Board agreed that the alley-facing courtyard of Option 2 provided a welcome relief to the Lowrise zone across the alley to the east. The Board also appreciate that both Options 2 and 3 included notches at the northeastern and northwestern corners that minimized bulk impacts on the structure to the north.
 - c. The Board would like to see greater efforts to investigate massing and develop a design that preserves the tree and is respectful to the adjacent sites, by maintaining access to light for these neighbors, as well as relief from the building mass. The Board also requested that a more rigorous examination of how the removal of the tree better meets the design guidelines be provided.
 - d. The Board noted that they alley is heavily used by pedestrians and cars. The high usage, zone change and limited width therefore deserve greater visual relief from the more urban, street facing frontage along 42nd Ave. The Board voiced concern regarding reduction of the rear setback as they agreed it is needed to address the zone transition and townhouses across the alley. The Board provided a caveat that they might be more inclined to consider a departure from the rear setback provided a design scheme were developed to preserve the tree and provide modulation and relief and well-considered open spaces to the east elevation.

¹ At the Early Design Guidance meeting, the existing Western Red Cedar on site was presented as meeting the standards in DR 16-2008 for designation as an Exceptional Tree. Subsequent to the meeting, the applicant provided additional information indicating that the Western Red Cedar does not meet the size requirements for designation as an Exceptional Tree.

2. **Location of Open Space.** The Board discussed the protection of light and air to both the neighbors across the alley, as well as to the north and agreed that the location of open spaces on the site were critical to addressing this sensitive condition. In general, the Board would like to see the distribution and location of open spaces better respond to the context – specifically providing relief to the north and east. How this is achieved will be a critical consideration in the review of any departure requests. (DC3.A, DC3.C)

3. **Enhanced Pedestrian Experience.** The Board was pleased with the proposed massing at the property line and agreed that it maintains an appropriate street edge. The Board suggested that as this urban streetscape is developing, any proposed open spaces and modulation on this site be integrated towards the northern and eastern edges. (CS2.C2, PL1.B, PL2.II, PL3.A, DC1.C, DC2.B, DC2.C, DC4)
 - a. The Board felt that preserving the tree and providing open space on the north side of the site will help to activate and enrich the pedestrian experience along 42nd Ave.
 - b. The Board noted they would be supportive of a mid-block connection along the north side of the site combined with the tree preservation.
 - c. The Board was supportive that the street elevation is intended to reinforce the positive aspects of the urban street wall established by the nearby Oregon 42 building.
 - d. The Board looks forward to reviewing a well-considered architectural composition, landscape design and high-quality and durable material palette at the next meeting.
 - e. The Board looks forward to reviewing a building entry that is clearly identifiable, architecturally distinctive and well-scaled.

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

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-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.

West Seattle Supplemental Guidance:

CS2-III Height, Bulk and Scale

CS2-III-i. Zoning Context: Applicant must analyze the site in relationship to its surroundings. This should include:

- a. Distance from less intensive zone; and
- b. Separation between lots in different zones (property line only, alley, grade changes).

CS2-III-ii. New Development in NC zones 65' or Higher:

- a. Patterns of urban form in existing built environment, such as setbacks and massing compositions.
- b. Size of Code-allowable building envelope in relation to underlying platting pattern.

CS2-III-iii. Facade Articulation: New buildings should use architectural methods including modulation, color, texture, entries, materials and detailing to break up the façade—particularly important for long buildings—into sections and character consistent with traditional, multi-bay commercial buildings prevalent in the neighborhood’s commercial core (see map 1, page 1).

CS2-III-iv. Break Up Visual Mass: The arrangement of architectural elements, materials and colors should aid in mitigating height, bulk and scale impacts of Neighborhood Commercial development, particularly at the upper levels. For development greater than 65 feet in height, a strong horizontal treatment (e.g. cornice line) should occur at 65 ft. Consider a change of materials, as well as a progressively lighter color application to reduce the appearance of upper levels from the street and adjacent properties. The use of architectural style, details (e.g. rooflines, cornice lines, fenestration patterns), and materials found in less intensive surrounding buildings should be considered.

CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

West Seattle 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 embellishment 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 (see map 1, page 1).

CS3-I-ii. Architectural Cues: New mixed-use development should respond to several architectural features common in the Junction’s best storefront buildings to preserve and enhance pedestrian orientation and maintain an acceptable level of consistency with the existing architecture. To create cohesiveness in the Junction, identifiable and exemplary architectural patterns should be reinforced. New elements can be introduced - provided they are accompanied by strong design linkages. Preferred elements can be found in the examples of commercial and mixed-use buildings in the Junction included on this page.

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-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-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.

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.

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.

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.

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, the following departure was requested:

1. **Rear Setback Requirements (SMC 23.47A.014.B3):** The Code requires a setback along any side or rear lot line that is across an alley from a lot in a residential zone as follows:

15' for portions that are between 13' and 40', and above 40', set back an additional 2' for every 10' above 40'. The applicant proposes zero setback from the rear lot line.

The Board indicated they were not inclined to support the proposed departure unless careful consideration is given to the preservation of the tree and designing a sensitive building transition to the east and north using modulation and open space provisions. *See Board Guidance on pages 3-4 for further information.*

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.