



RECOMMENDATION ADMINISTRATIVE DESIGN REVIEW

Project Number: 3020441
Address: 308 12th Avenue East
Applicant: Rob Humble for Hybrid Architects
Date of Guidance: Thursday, March 17, 2016
DPD Staff: Holly J. Godard

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Lowrise 3 (LR3)
Nearby Zones: (North) Lowrise 3 (LR3)
(South) Lowrise 3 (LR3)
(East) Lowrise 3 (LR3)
(West) Lowrise 3 (LR3)
Lot Area: 7,655 square feet



Current Development:

There are two structures on the development site; a single family home with detached garage and a two story triplex with garage.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

Surrounding development is a mix of multifamily structures and single family homes. The mix of uses is migrating to predominantly multifamily structures in this Lowrise 3 zone. The site to the north is a large multifamily structure built in the 1960's. The lot to the east is a duplex structure located in an older single family dwelling unit. There are single family homes across the intersection of East Thomas Street and 12 Avenue East. The neighborhood multifamily architectural character is a mix of brick apartment buildings built in the mid 1920's, 1960's multifamily buildings, modern and contemporary multifamily styles, and single family homes some of which have been converted to multifamily structures.

Access:

Access is available via both streets; East Thomas Street and 12 Avenue East.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

No Environmentally Critical Areas are mapped at the site.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project proponents plan to design a multifamily building with a mix of studio, one and two bedroom apartments. Some of the studio apartments are slated to be small efficiency dwelling units. No parking is required or proposed.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE August 21, 2015

The packet includes materials presented to the City, and is available online by entering the project number (3020441) 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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comments were received which focused primarily on lack of parking and density intensification in the area. Comments also pointed out positive design elements to retain or explore including focusing units to 12th Avenue, providing useable and welcoming stairs to enter the development, reducing the sense of height and bulk, lessening the unit count, and providing additional setbacks from properties to the east.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the planner provided the following siting and design guidance.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE

1. Connections for street-level interaction: (CS-1C, CS-2B, CS-2C1, PL3-A-1,2,4)

Street-level activation, eyes on the street, and a sense of site openness should characterize the development.

- a. Create a porous interface with the right of way to allow ease of access and visual access.
- b. Create clear connections to building entries.
- c. Encourage human interaction at the street level.
- d. Provide units at ground level with outdoor opportunities.
- e. Create areas for residents to interact.

2. Bulk and scale: (CS1-C, CS2-D-1,5; CS2-1-v, PL2-I,II,III)

Where possible the development should strive to sit lightly on the site by using a variety of architectural conventions.

- a. Use the site grade to lower the building into grade without blank facades or rockeries.
- b. Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the scale of the building.
- c. Employ full landscaping to give a transition in scale to neighboring properties.
- d. Step back and break up varying building volumes to reduce the bulk of the building. The two “building” massing is a good direction to explore and develop.
- e. Use glazing where possible to give more transparency to the building.
- f. Wrap building elements around the corner of the building to carry the design language to the south façade; windows, decks, railings.
- g. Lower elevator overruns and stair towers where possible.

3. Unified and functional design: (DC1-A-1,DC1-II, DC2-A,C,D, E, DC3-I, DC4-C)

Use contextual cues to identify elements to incorporate in creating a unified corner building design. The front stairway is one good example you have identified and are exploring.

- a. Use several contextual cues that will help identify the building as unique to the varied character of the area.
- b. Create options to access the site via stairs and ramps for ease of access.
- c. Consider functional design for bicycles and pedestrians.
- d. Open passageways to the air or via glazing to keep light and air in the circulation areas.
- e. Locate units where they gain the best light, air, and entry function.

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines identified by the planner 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-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-C Relationship to the Block

CS2-C-1. Corner Sites: Corner sites can serve as gateways or focal points; both require careful detailing at the first three floors due to their high visibility from two or more streets and long distances.

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-5. Respect for Adjacent Sites: Respect adjacent properties with design and site planning to minimize disrupting the privacy of residents in adjacent buildings.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

CS2-I Streetscape Compatibility

CS2-I-v. Multiple Frontages: For buildings that span a block and “front” on two streets, each street frontage should receive individual and detailed site planning and architectural design treatments.

CS2-II Corner Lots

CS2-II-i. Residential Entries: Incorporate residential entries and special landscaping into corner lots by setting the structure back from the property lines.

CS2-II-ii. Retail Corner Entry: Provide for a prominent retail corner entry.

CS2-III Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility

CS2-III-i. Building Mass: 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-ii. Views: Consider existing views to downtown Seattle, the Space Needle, Elliott Bay and the Olympic Mountains, and incorporate site and building design features that may help to preserve those views from public rights-of-way.

CS2-III-iii. Sunlight: Design new buildings to maximize the amount of sunshine on adjacent sidewalks throughout the year.

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-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.

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.

PL1-C-2. Informal Community Uses: In addition to places for walking and sitting, consider including space for informal community use such as performances, farmer’s markets, kiosks and community bulletin boards, cafes, or street vending.

PL1-C-3. Year-Round Activity: Where possible, include features in open spaces for activities beyond daylight hours and throughout the seasons of the year, especially in neighborhood centers where active open space will contribute vibrancy, economic health, and public safety.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

PL1-I Pedestrian Links

PL1-I-i. Pedestrian Links: Consider design approaches that provide clear, unobstructed pedestrian links between the station entries, public spaces on E. Denny Way, and the plaza space across E. Denny Way.

PL1-II Lighting

PL1-I-i. Lighting: Consider additional pedestrian lighting such as catenary suspended lighting to enhance the E. Denny Way Festival Street.

PL1-III Network of Public Spaces

PL1-III-i. Public Space Accessibility: Consider design approaches that make new public spaces easily accessible from existing sidewalks and public areas, and proposed new light rail station entries.

PL1-III-ii. Plaza: Consider design approaches to the pedestrian pass throughs of Site A and Site B in a way that draws the public into the plaza.

PL1-IV Outdoor Uses and Activities

PL1-IV-i. Plaza Activation: Within the plaza, consider appropriate substructures, built elements and utility connections to ensure the proposed plaza can be used for Farmer’s Markets, performance and other temporary uses that provide interest and activity.

PL1-IV-ii. Grade Transitions: Consider taking advantage of grade changes between the plaza level and adjacent sites to create transitions used for seating or other amenities.

PL2 Walkability: Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.

PL2-A Accessibility

PL2-A-1. Access for All: Provide access for people of all abilities in a manner that is fully integrated into the project design. Design entries and other primary access points such that all visitors can be greeted and welcomed through the front door.

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.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

PL2-I Human Scale

PL2-I-i. Building Entries: Incorporate building entry treatments that are arched or framed in a manner that welcomes people and protects them from the elements and emphasizes the building’s architecture.

PL2-I-ii. Pedestrian Character: Improve and support pedestrian-orientation by using components such as: non-reflective storefront windows and transoms; pedestrianscaled awnings; architectural detailing on the first floor; and detailing at the roof line.

PL2-II Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances

PL2-II-i. Entryways: Provide entryways that link the building to the surrounding landscape.

PL2-II-ii. Link Open Spaces: Create open spaces at street level that link to the open space of the sidewalk.

PL2-II-iii. Ingress/Egress: Building entrances should emphasize pedestrian ingress and egress as opposed to accommodating vehicles.

PL2-II-iv. Residential Entrances: Minimize the number of residential entrances on commercial streets where non-residential uses are required. Where unavoidable, minimize their impact to the vitality of the retail commercial streetscape.

PL2-III Personal Safety and Security

PL2-III-i. Lighting/Windows: Consider

- a. pedestrian-scale lighting, but prevent light spillover onto adjacent properties
- b. architectural lighting to complement the architecture of the structure
- c. transparent windows allowing views into and out of the structure—thus incorporating the “eyes on the street” design approach.

PL2-III-ii. Travel Area Distinction: Provide a clear distinction between pedestrian traffic areas and commercial traffic areas through the use of different paving materials or colors, landscaping, etc.

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.

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.

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-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.

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.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

DC3-I Residential Open Space

DC3-I-i. Open Space: Incorporate quasi-public open space with residential development, with special focus on corner landscape treatments and courtyard entries.

DC3-I-ii. Courtyards: Create substantial courtyard-style open space that is visually accessible to the public view.

DC3-I-iii. View Corridors: Set back development where appropriate to preserve view corridors.

DC3-I-iv. Upper-floor Setbacks: Set back upper floors to provide solar access to the sidewalk and/or neighboring properties.

DC3-I-v. Street Trees: Mature street trees have a high value to the neighborhood and departures from development standards that an arborist determines would impair the health of a mature tree are discouraged.

DC3-I-vi. Landscape Materials: Use landscape materials that are sustainable, requiring minimal irrigation or fertilizer.

DC3-I-vii. Porous Paving: Use porous paving materials to enhance design while also minimizing stormwater run-off.

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-C-2. Avoiding Glare: Design project lighting based upon the uses on and off site, taking care to provide illumination to serve building needs while avoiding off-site night glare and light pollution.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Planner's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based on the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall project design than could be achieved without the departure(s). The recommendation will be reserved until the final recommendation review.

At the time of the Early Design Guidance the following departure was requested:

1. **Façade Length (SMT 23.45.527):** The Code allows 65% of the lot line for building façade length. The applicant proposes greater façade length at the north property line, 8% increase, given that the building is proposed to be setback greater than code required at the front and corner of the lot.

1. Connections for street-level interaction: (CS-1C, CS-2B, CS-2C1, PL3-A-1,2,4)

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- a. Create a porous interface with the right of way to allow ease of access and visual access.
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- e. Create areas for residents to interact.

Design Response: The applicant has responded to early guidance and public comments by providing a porous interface on 12th Avenue East. The main building stairway is accessed mid site and first and second level apartments have large windows and patios or decks to encourage a high level of eyes on the street and human interaction. The building entries are visible and accessible from the streets. Residents will be able to interact in all passageways and entries to the building.

2. Bulk and scale: (CS1-C, CS2-D-1,5; CS2-1-v, PL2-I,II,III)

Where possible the development should strive to sit lightly on the site by using a variety of architectural conventions.

- a. Use the site grade to lower the building into grade without blank facades or rockeries.
- b. Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the scale of the building.
- c. Employ full landscaping to give a transition in scale to neighboring properties.
- d. Step back and break up varying building volumes to reduce the bulk of the building. The two “building” massing is a good direction to explore and develop.
- e. Use glazing where possible to give more transparency to the building.
- f. Wrap building elements around the corner of the building to carry the design language to the south façade; windows, decks, railings.
- g. Lower elevator overruns and stair towers where possible.

Design Response: The building has been sunken into the existing grade so that there is no street wall or rockery on 12th Avenue which creates a condition where the building sits at street grade. The applicant has designed the building with a base and upper sections to break up the perceived scale of the building. Landscaping is employed to soften building edges and to create green walls where appropriate. The design has a lot of building transparency with large windows.

3. Unified and functional design: (DC1-A-1,DC1-II, DC2-A,C,D, E, DC3-I, DC4-C)

Use contextual cues to identify elements to incorporate in creating a unified corner building design. The front stairway is one good example you have identified and are exploring.

- a. Use several contextual cues that will help identify the building as unique to the varied character of the area.
- b. Create options to access the site via stairs and ramps for ease of access.
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- e. Locate units where they gain the best light, air, and entry function.

Design Response: The applicant has studied the neighborhood and finds that there are many red brick buildings and red tile roofs in the greater area. The building’s red color has thus been chosen to recall and to fit into the neighborhood context. The design demonstrates contextual cues such as identifiable units in the façade composition, a visible main entry stair, red façade color and numerous areas at grade for full and striving landscaping.

Departures

SUMMARY OF REQUESTED DEPARTURES

	Standard Requirement	Allowed	Proposed	Architects Rationale for Departure	
1	23.45.527.B.1 Façade Length.	Façade length may be 65% of the lot length which is 65 feet at this site.	72 feet or a 10% departure.	The additional façade length helps the building pull away from adjacent sites and streets for a better neighborhood fit. (CS2 B-1, B2, CS2-C1, CS2-D5)	Recommend approval

Recommendation:

After considering the proposed design and the project context, hearing public comment, and reconsidering the previously stated design priorities, the guidance that had been has been addressed by the applicant. The departure request is supported with no conditions to the design.

The recommendation summarized above was based on the design review packet dated February 9, 2016, and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, the design is APPROVED with no conditions.