City of Seattle

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

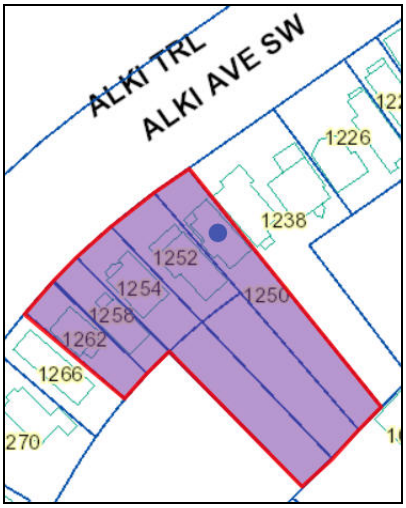
DESIGN REVIEW

FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE SOUTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number:	3020640
Address:	1250 Alki Ave SW
Applicant:	Jeremy Thompson, Soltera
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, October 15, 2015
Board Members Present:	Todd Bronk (Chair) Donald Caffrey Alexandra Moravec Matt Zinski
Board Members Absent:	T. Frick McNamara
DPD Staff Present:	BreAnne McConkie, Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone:	Midrise (MR)/Single Family 7200 (SF 7200)(split zone)
Nearby Zones:	N/A (waterfront lot)(North) SF7200(South) MR/SF7200 (East) MR/SF7200(West)
Lot Area:	39,578 square feet (sq. ft.)



Site & Current Development: The site, which contains five single family structures, is located at 1250-1262 Alki Ave SW and consists of five parcels fronting Alki Ave SW and two hill side parcels. The hillside parcels have a significant slope from the north down towards the south and are heavily vegetated. No development is proposed on the steeply sloped portion of the site. The portion of the site where development is proposed is located along the Alki Ave SW frontage and is relatively flat.

A portion of the site is located in the Shoreline Urban Residential Overlay and the entire site is located within the Alki Parking Overlay.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character: The Alki area is a unique neighborhood with an eclectic mix of traditional single family bungalows and more contemporary mid-rise, multi-family residential buildings. The waterfront neighborhood is somewhat separated from the residential development to the south by notable topographic changes and a significant amount of vegetation.

Access: Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site is proposed from Alki Ave SW.

Environmentally Critical Areas: The area along the south/southeast portion of the site is mapped as an ECA Steep Slope. The entire site is mapped as an ECA Potential Slide Area, with mapped Known Slides near the site. The site is also mapped as an ECA Liquefaction area and Archaeological Buffer area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is to allow a 5-story structure with 100 residential units and 1,500 square feet of retail. Parking for 120 vehicles to be provided below grade. Existing structures to be removed.

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

Mailing Address: **Public Resource Center**
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

PUBLIC COMMENT

Many members of the public were in attendance and offered the following comment:

- Noted that the packet was lacking variation in the massing options and that the updated preferred Option presented was not included in the packet.
- Thought a massing option with a more unique splay in the massing could be explored.
- Did not have an issue with the building height because of the hill.
- Stated the bulk was out of scale with the rest of the developments – both old and new.
- Did not support the open walkway "sky bridges" between the ROW and the courtyard.
- Noted that façade modulation is critical.
- Thought Option Three best protected the views of neighbors.
- Concerned that the courtyard would be very dark.
- Did not support the departures because they resulted in a perceived larger mass.
- Expressed support for the project noting that Alki has gone through a positive transformation into a family friendly area and that the area lacks diversity of housing types.
- The proposal would provide a needed diversity of housing types and affordable housing compared to the predominant high-end, low-density condos in Alki.
- Appreciated that the applicant was investing in slope stability and drainage on the hillside and noted that development will make the slope more stable.
- Was not opposed to an apartment and the proposed type of use, but was concerned with the scale and compatibility of the massing.
- Duwamish Greenbelt is one of the most visible green spaces in Seattle. Noted that most of the current development in the area has 10 to 15 foot side setbacks that allow for visibility to the green hillside and that the project should include greater side setbacks to maintain a visual connection to the green space.
- The Action Alki Alliance offered the following verbal comments in addition to their written comments distributed at the meeting:
    - Not supportive of the project because it is out of scale for the neighborhood.
    - Would have liked to see the updated version presented at the meeting that was not included in the packet.
    - Did not support the total number of units and density proposed because it is not consistent with the character of the area.
    - Did not support the roof top deck because of the potential negative impacts including noise and smoke from the fire pit.
    - Expressed concern with the stability of the slope and stated the project should not encroach into the steep slope buffer.
    - Noted that project was not compatible with the surrounding development, specifically because of the scale and proposed front and side setbacks. Disagreed that the break in the front façade of the Applicant's Preferred Option would provide enough relief in the massing and did not support the related departure.
    - Did not support the height of the building.
    - Felt that an additional EDG meeting would be prudent to address community's concerns and to focus on furthering the design.
    - Understood that development will likely occur but would like something that better fits the scale and character of the area.

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. **Massing, Bulk, & Scale.** The Board discussed the incompleteness and lack of variation in the massing options presented and noted that further development of the massing options, including integration of the architectural concepts presented, was needed before a preferred option could be identified.
    a. The Board noted that Option 2 and the updated version of Option 3 may be feasible and directed the applicant to further develop one or both of these options. Additionally, Option 4 (code compliant) should be feasible and further developed beyond a zoning envelope box. For the next meeting the applicant should provide at least two options, one of which is code compliant. **(CS2-D-all, DC2-A-1, DC2-A-2)**
    b. The Board expressed concern with the flatness of the planes, lack of articulation, and disconnect between the architectural concepts on pages 6.1 and 6.2 of the EDG packet and massing options presented. The applicant should take the architectural concepts presented and further develop and apply these to the updated massing options. **(DC2-A-2, DC2-B-1, DC2-C-1, DC2-D-1&2)**
    c. The Board expressed initial support for the additional splay in the wings of the Applicant's updated preferred Option and noted that the courtyard should be widened and either be at grade or, at a minimum, have a strong relationship to the street grade. **(CS2-B-2, CS2-D-4, CS1-B-1&2, PL1-A-1)**
    d. The Board noted that light and air to the courtyard and inward facing units was a concern and should be addressed. **(CS1-B-1, CS1-B-2)**
    e. The Applicant should demonstrate how the courtyard and massing for Options 2 and 3 provides a more meaningful break in the mass. The widths of the massing break(s) should be equal to or greater than the requested departure for additional structure width. **(CS2-D-4, CS1-B-1&2, PL1-A-1)**
    f. For the next meeting, the applicant should provide a more comprehensive streetscape elevation of the development on Alki Ave to show how the proposed options successfully fit into the existing context. **(CS2-D-1, DC2-A-1)**
    g. The Board encouraged the applicant to work with the Action Alki Alliance as they further develop their massing options.

2. **Streetscape/Grade Relationship & Entries.**
    a. The Board expressed concern with street level interaction and grade relationship, specifically noting that they did not support the entry, retail and residential uses being partially below grade and directed the applicant to resolve the grade relationship. At least one option should be provided with the first floor at the street grade. **(CS2-B-2, PL3-A-1, PL3-B-1, PL3-C-1,2,&3)**

b. The Board did not support the retail design in the Applicant's preferred Option, specifically noting the setback, overhang of the upper stories, and partially below grade configuration as problematic and non-inviting. **(CS2-B-2, PL3-A-1, PL3-C-all)**
c. The Board noted that Alki Ave and the Alki Trail across the street were prominent public thoroughfares and directed the Applicant to further develop how the massing scheme faces and frames Alki Ave. **(CS2-B-2, PL1-A-1, PL1-A-2, PL1-B-1&3)**
d. The Board noted that many residents will likely use bicycles for transportation and requested additional information on the bicyclist facilities. **(PL4-B-1&2)**

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-1. Sun and Wind: Take advantage of solar exposure and natural ventilation. Use local wind patterns and solar gain to reduce the need for mechanical ventilation and heating where possible.

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-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-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.

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.

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-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.

PL3-C-3. Ancillary Activities: Allow space for activities such as sidewalk vending, seating, and restaurant dining to occur. Consider setting structures back from the street or incorporating space in the project design into which retail uses can extend.

PL4 Active Transportation: Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.

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.

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.

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-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.

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.

DC4-A-2. Climate Appropriateness: Select durable and attractive materials that will age well in Seattle's climate, taking special care to detail corners, edges, and transitions.

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 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 departures were requested:

1. **Structure Width (23.45.528.A):** The Code limits the width of principal structures to no greater than 150 feet. The applicant proposes a structure width of 168'-2", which is 18'-2" greater than the allowable width.

The Board indicated concern with the bulk and scale of the structure and noted that a meaningful relief in massing would be needed to justify how the departure resulted in a better design. Specifically, the width of the massing break/courtyard should be equal to or greater than the requested departure for additional structure width.

2. **Structure Depth (23.45.528.B):** The Code limits the depth of principal structures to not exceed 75 percent of the depth of the lot. The applicant proposes a structure depth of 102'-7", 12'-7" greater than the 90' allowed by code.

The Board indicated concern with the bulk and scale of the structure and noted that a meaningful relief in massing would be needed to justify how the departure resulted in a better design.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the First Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board unanimously recommended the project return for another meeting in response to the guidance provided.