



City of Seattle

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



INITIAL EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3020860

Address: 1830 E Mercer St

Applicant: Kevin Tabari, Public 47 Architects

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, September 16, 2015

Board Members Present: Curtis Bigelow
Barbara Busetti
Dan Foltz
Natalie Gualy
Christina Orr-Cahall

DPD Staff Present: Beth Hartwick

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial 1-40 (NC1-40)

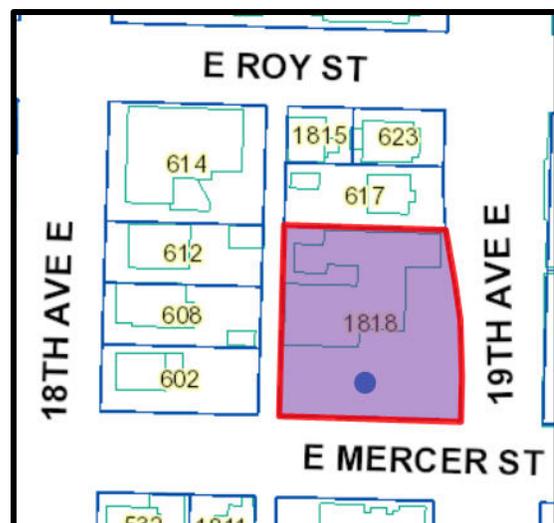
Nearby Zones: (North) NC1-40 and SF5000
(South) NC1-40
(East) NC1-40 and SF5000
(West) SF5000

Lot Area: 19,420 Sq. Ft.

Current Development: The site is occupied by a two-story structure originally built in 1905 that has had many additions and modifications. The structure use is office space and a restaurant.

Access: The lot has street frontage along 19th Ave E, E Mercer St. and an improved alley.

Environmentally Critical Areas: None



Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character: The site is located in a two block Neighborhood Commercial zone surrounded mostly by a Single Family zone and a few blocks of a Lowrise zone. The commercial development along 19th Ave E consists of smaller storefronts housing restaurants and small businesses. Kitty-corner to the site is a recently completed 4 story mixed use development. Across E Mercer St is a 10 unit 2-story apartment building managed by the Seattle Housing Authority which was constructed in 1980. Across the alley are well maintained single family residences built in the first decade of the 1900's. Across 19th Ave E is a brick three-story mixed use building that was built in 1907.

One block to the north is St. Joseph's church and school and two blocks to the south is the Miller Community Center and Meany Middle School. A bus route runs down 19th Ave E.

The site is located within the Madison-Miller Residential Urban Village.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project is proposing a 5-story mixed use building with 32 apartment units, approx. 2,350 sq. ft. of commercial space and 12 enclosed parking spaces.

The existing structure on the site will remain with the proposed structure being built where surface parking is currently located.

The corner site sloped down approx. 16' from the alley to 19th Ave E. The site has a number of large trees, with at least one that may be considered an Exceptional Tree. That tree is a cedar tree located south of the existing structure on the site, near 19th Ave E.

INITIAL EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE September 16, 2015

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number 3020860 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 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

The following public comments were offered at the meeting:

- Concerned that easy access to the existing commercial uses will disappear after this development is built.
- Concerned about further development of the site.
- Supported a corner residential lobby.

- Concerned about parking access on E Mercer St due to the housing authority project across the street.
- Concerned about the loss of trees as they provide a visual respite.
- Stated appreciation for a building with high quality materials and is looking forward to the development as an addition to the neighborhood.
- Stated support for the development kitty-corner to the site.
- Concerned about the loss of trees but appreciated the thought out plans.
- Preferred the alternative with the maximum amount of retail space.
- Supported and encouraged the parking to be provided.
- Encouraged the curb cut to parking access be located on 19th Ave E, as E Mercer is tough to navigate.
- Concerned about the loss of two parking spaces on E Mercer St.
- Encouraged the project and stated it would be better without parking.
- Supported retail space for small neighborhood uses.
- Encouraged a lobby off of 19th Ave E.
- Concerned about the solid waste storage location as it needs easy access.
- Encouraged solid retail space to support commercial pockets in urban neighborhoods.
- Noted that if the tree is exceptional and is removed, great landscaping should be provided.
- Commended the design team as the site is challenging.
- Encouraged the residential lobby on E Mercer St as a corner lobby would take up commercial space.
- Encouraged extending the retail space.
- Supported commercial use at the corner over a residential lobby.
- Stated a love of trees, but the trees on this site are not important.
- Appreciated the design team.
- Stated that E Mercer St parking needs to be accessed.
- Concerned about parking impacts from the project.
- Encouraged down lighting on the building.

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.

Early Design Guidance: September 16, 2015

1. **Massing Concept: The Board supported the applicant moving forward with their preferred Alternative 3, noting that it will add the most commercial frontage along 19th Ave E and enhance the context of the Madison-Miller Urban Village. (CS2.A.1) The following guidance was given:**
 - a. In the courtyard between the existing and proposed structures, provide lighting and safety measures to discourage transient use. (PL2.B.2)

- b. Support the continuity of the commercial space at the existing building. (CS3.A.1)
- c. Proceed with the materials shown in the EDG packet. (DC4.A.1)

2. Streetscape: The Board noted that all the alternatives added to the streetscape, but Alternative 3 was the strongest. (CS2.B.2) The following guidance was given:

- a. Design the commercial space to activate the corner. (PL3.C.1)
- b. The lobby entry should be well designed. (PL3A.2)
- c. Explore the use of the residential lobby to access the existing building uses and services. (PL3A.2)

3. Access to Parking: The Board agreed that access to parking from E Mercer St. was not a great location but it appeared to be the preferable location to access the mostly underground parking and to maximize commercial space along 19th Ave E and the site corner. (CS1.C.1, DC1.B.1)

- a. Consider reducing the sight triangles at the garage entry on E Mercer St. The Board indicated support for a departure to allow mirrors instead of full site triangles to reduce the size of the parking entry. (DC1.C.2)

4. Cedar Tree along 19th Ave E: The Board was supportive of removing the tree and stated that a strong commercial frontage on 19th Ave E and at the site corner is preferred over saving the tree. However a strong streetscape including high quality landscaping must be provided. (DC4.D.4) [Staff note: if an arborist determines the tree is exceptional and in good health, the Board will need to vote to recommend removal of the tree.]

- a. Provide high quality landscaping along the street and on site. (DC4.D.4)

At the Recommendation Meeting provide the following:

- Provide elevations and color renderings from eye level to show what the E Mercer St. streetscape with the parking access and lobby will look like.
- Provide a well-considered plan of where solid waste will be stored and how it will be serviced.

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-C Topography

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-A Location in the City and Neighborhood

CS2-A-1. Sense of Place: Emphasize attributes that give a distinctive sense of place. Design the building and open spaces to enhance areas where a strong identity already exists, and create a sense of place where the physical context is less established.

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-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-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.

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

CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes

CS3-A-1. Fitting Old and New Together: Create compatibility between new projects, and existing architectural context, including historic and modern designs, through building articulation, scale and proportion, roof forms, detailing, fenestration, and/or the use of complementary materials.

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.

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-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-2. Common Entries: Multi-story residential buildings need to provide privacy and security for residents but also be welcoming and identifiable to visitors.

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.

DESIGN CONCEPT

DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

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-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-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-C Lighting

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.

DC4-D Trees, Landscape, and Hardscape Materials

DC4-D-4. Place Making: Create a landscape design that helps define spaces with significant elements such as trees.

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 Initial Early Design Guidance the following departures were requested:

1. **Parking Access (SMC23.47A.032.A.1.a)** The Code requires that access to parking be from the alley if the lot abuts an improved alley. The applicant is proposing access to parking be from E Mercer St. due to the site topography.

The Board indicated they would be inclined to grant this departure as it will help maximize the commercial space along 19th Ave E. and let the site inform the design. (CS1.C.2)

2. **Location of Parking (SMC23.47A.032.B.1.b)** The Code requires that parking located within a structure, at street-level, shall be separated from the street-level, street-facing facade by another permitted use. The applicant is proposing that the portion of the enclosed parking along the E Mercer St facade be allowed without an intervening use.

The Board indicated they would be inclined to grant this departure as it will facilitate underground parking. (Dc1.C.1)

RECOMMENDATIONS

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the Initial EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board directed the applicant to proceed with MUP application.