



City of Seattle

Department of Construction and Inspections
Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN
REVIEW

FIRST RECOMMENDATION OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3020958

Address: 121 15th Avenue E

Applicant: Radim Blazej of Caron Architecture

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, July 20, 2016

Board Members Present: Natalie Gualy, Chair
Curtis Bigelow
Dan Foltz
Amy Taylor

Board Members Absent: Christina Orr-Cahall
Barbara Busetti

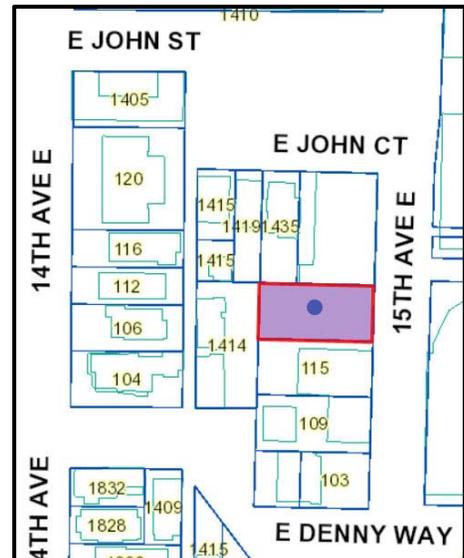
SDCI Staff Present: Magda Hogness

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial Pedestrian (NC2P-40)

Nearby Zones: Neighborhood Commercial Pedestrian (NC2P-40), Neighborhood Commercial Pedestrian (NC2P-40), Major Institution Overlay/Neighborhood Commercial (MIO-105-NC2-40), Lowrise (LR-3)

Lot Area: 7,879 sq. ft.



Current Development:

The mid-block site contains a surface parking lot with a small parking attendant kiosk structure.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The site is located along the south edge of the 15th Avenue East commercial corridor within the Capitol Hill Neighborhood as described in the Capitol Hill Design Guidelines. The 15th Avenue corridor extends from East Denny Way to Roy Street, a few blocks south of Volunteer Park. This area is characterized by pedestrian-scale storefront buildings and includes a variety of uses: institution, office, retail, restaurants, and services many transit routes. The surrounding area also includes a mix of multifamily and single family residential uses, supporting the commercial uses along 15th Avenue East.

Access:

Existing vehicular access is from 15th Avenue. A shared access easement with the adjacent property is located along the south property line. No parking is proposed with the new development.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

There are no mapped Environmentally Critical Areas onsite.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant is proposing a four-story, 34 unit apartment building with ground floor retail.

The design packet includes information 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

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were provided at the Early Design Guidance meeting.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance.

- 1. Massing and Architectural Concept:** The Board deliberated the massing options and discussed the overall scale and response to the context. The Board recognized that the general massing is appropriately scaled for the mid-block site to create a continuous street edge along 15th Avenue. However, the Board was concerned with the amount of plane and height changes shown in the preferred scheme. Discussing the different options, the Board directed the applicant to simplify their preferred scheme and to use high quality materials instead of multiple massing shifts. The Board also stated they would be open to the applicant moving forward with the second or the third massing option, if the frontages are simplified and high quality materials are provided (CS2-C2, DC2-B1, DC2-D2, DC4-A1, DC4-I, DC4-II)
 - a. The Board indicated they were unsupportive of the presented inspiration images and recommended design development consistent with their guidance for a simple, high quality façade. (DC2-B, DC4-A)

- 2. Zoning Transition and Edges:** The Board gave direction on the proposal's edges.
 - a. The Board acknowledged the zone transition and discussed the rear massing of the structure. The Board agreed the setback departure massing better respected the adjacent property, since the façade can be driven by design logic for the whole building rather than as a direct expression of zoning code at this specific location. The Board stressed the importance of detailing this facade. (CS2-D2, DC2-D2, DC4-A1, DC4-I, DC4-II)
 - b. The Board supported the individual open space proportions along the west portion of the site. (CS2-D2, DC2-D2, DC4-D)

- 3. Entries and Street Level Interaction:** The Board gave direction on the entries and street level interaction.
 - a. The Board supported the location of the residential entry and related departure and noted the alignment with the Group Health pedestrian walkway across the street strengthens the desirable forms in the surrounding area. (CS2-B2, PL3-A1, PL3-A4)
 - b. The Board discussed the easement portal and disruption to the sidewalk. The Board strongly recommended hardscape pavers or scoring to reduce the impacts of the curb cut and create a more continuous sidewalk. (DC1-C2, CS2-I-i, DC1-I-i)
 - c. For the easement portal itself, the Board recommended aligning the wall adjacent to the trash room to remove the blind corners at the ground floor. The Board directed

the applicant to develop the design with consideration of safety and security, and to provide renderings of this space. (PL2-B, DC4-C, DC1-II-i)

FIRST RECOMMENDATION July 20, 2016

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following public comments were offered at the First Recommendation meeting

- Would like to see the residential entry more clearly defined.
- Noted that other projects designed by the architect nearby are better detailed.
- Noted the opportunity to lavish a little more on the material and detailing; would like to see better material proposed.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Architectural Design, Composition and Materiality:** The Board agreed that the street façade had been simplified and supported the massing composition, however the Board also recognized that the largest concern raised at the EDG remains the street facing façade application of materials and detailing. The Board suggested the applicant return with a few alternate designs for the street facing façade based on the guidance provided.
 - a. The Board struggled with how the design relates to adjacent buildings and creates its own sense of place and identity, and requested renderings with the adjacent buildings superimposed for the next meeting. (CS2-C2, DC2)
 - b. Echoing the public comment, the Board was unanimously concerned with the proposed materials and detailing of the street facing façade. The Board also noted the first floor appears disjointed from the rest of the façade composition. The Board recommended developing a well-proportioned architectural expression through the exploration of materials and detailing. (CS2-C2, DC2, DC4-A1, DC4-I, DC4-II)
- 2. Entries and Streetscape:** The Board discussed the entries and gave guidance on how to revise the design to enhance the streetscape.
 - a. The Board was concerned with the residential entry vestibule and service exit frontage and recommended revising the design to read as an integrated part of the façade composition and reinforce the streetscape. Related to the requested departure for this area, the majority of the Board indicated preliminary support for the departure, provided that the frontage along the residential service exit and vestibule is well proportioned and detailed. (CS2-B2, PL3-A1, PL3-A4)
 - b. To reflect the uniqueness the site, the Board recommended differentiated ground level treatment, additional planting and pedestrian amenities to encourage human interaction and activity. (PL1-B, PL3-C)
- 3. Edges, Zoning Transition and Easement Portal:** The Board gave direction on the proposal's edges.

- a. The Board supported the façade development along the zone transition and indicated preliminary support for the related setback departure as the design better respected the adjacent property with a coherent design composition. (CS2-D3, DC2)
- b. The Board also questioned if the roof deck location was appropriate as it was located adjacent to the zone transition. Ultimately the Board supported the location of the roof deck, as the adjacent zone was multifamily and the proposed location reflects adjacent existing development. (CS2-D3, CS2-D5, DC3)
- c. The Board supported the development of the easement portal, in particular the addition of glazing and soffit lighting. The Board agreed the developed design creates a pleasant and safe area and addresses their previous concerns with safety and security. (PL2-B, DC4-C, DC1-II-i)

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 Recommendation meeting the following departures were requested:

1. **Street-Level Uses (SMC 23.47A.005):** The Code permits a maximum 20% residential use along the street-level façade. The applicant proposes 26% residential use along the street-level façade.

The majority of the Board indicated preliminary support for the departure, provided the entry and service exit are well proportioned and detailed, as the residential entry aligns with open spaces in the surrounding area. (CS2-B2, PL3-A1, PL3-A4)

2. **Rear Setback Requirements (SMC 47A.014):** The Code requires a 15 feet rear setback along any rear lot line that abuts a lot in a residential zone for portions of structures above 13 feet and an additional 2 feet setback for every 10 feet above 40 feet. The applicant proposes an 11’-8” setback for all heights.

The Board gave preliminary support for the departure since the volume added to upper floors is less than the ground floor volume allowed by Code and the façade can be driven by design logic for the whole building. (DC2-A-1, DC2-B-1)

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-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.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

CS2-I Streetscape Compatibility

CS2-I-i. Sidewalk Width: Retain or increase the width of sidewalks

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.

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-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.

PL2-C Weather Protection

PL2-C-1. Locations and Coverage: Overhead weather protection is encouraged and should be located at or near uses that generate pedestrian activity such as entries, retail uses, and transit stops.

PL2-C-2. Design Integration: Integrate weather protection, gutters and downspouts into the design of the structure as a whole, and ensure that it also relates well to neighboring buildings in design, coverage, or other features.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

PL2-II Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances

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

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.

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-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.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

PL3-I Human Activity

PL3-I-i. Open Storefronts: Provide for sidewalk retail opportunities and connections by allowing for the opening of the storefront to the street and displaying goods.

PL3-I-ii. Outdoor Seating: Provide for outdoor eating and drinking opportunities on the sidewalk by allowing restaurant or café windows to open to the sidewalk and installing outdoor seating while maintaining pedestrian flow.

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. Do not block views into the interior spaces with the backs of shelving units or with posters.

DESIGN CONCEPT

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

DC1-C Parking and Service Uses

DC1-C-2. Visual Impacts: Reduce the visual impacts of parking lots, parking structures, entrances, and related signs and equipment as much as possible.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

DC1-I Parking and Vehicle Access

DC1-I-i. Continuous Crosswalks: 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 broken within a block by vehicular access.

DC1-II Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas

DC1-II-i. Dumpsters: Consolidate and screen dumpsters to preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment.

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-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-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-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-B Signage

DC4-B-1. Scale and Character: Add interest to the streetscape with exterior signs and attachments that are appropriate in scale and character to the project and its environs.

DC4-B-2. Coordination with Project Design: Develop a signage plan within the context of architectural and open space concepts, and coordinate the details with façade design, lighting, and other project features to complement the project as a whole, in addition to the surrounding context.

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.

DC4-D Trees, Landscape, and Hardscape Materials

DC4-D-1. Choice of Plant Materials: Reinforce the overall architectural and open space design concepts through the selection of landscape materials.

DC4-D-2. Hardscape Materials: Use exterior courtyards, plazas, and other hard surfaced areas as an opportunity to add color, texture, and/or pattern and enliven public areas through the use of distinctive and durable paving materials. Use permeable materials wherever possible.

DC4-D-3. Long Range Planning: Select plants that upon maturity will be of appropriate size, scale, and shape to contribute to the site as intended.

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

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

DC4-I Height, Bulk, and Scale

DC4-I-i. Materials: Masonry and terra cotta are preferred building materials, although other materials may be used in ways that are compatible with these more traditional materials. The Broadway Market is an example of a development that blends well with its surroundings and includes a mixture of materials, including masonry.

DC4-II Exterior Finish Materials

DC4-II-i. 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.

1. Use wood shingles or board and batten siding on residential structures.
2. Avoid wood or metal siding materials on commercial structures.
3. Provide operable windows, especially on storefronts.
4. Use materials that are consistent with the existing or intended neighborhood character, including brick, cast stone, architectural stone, terracotta details, and concrete that incorporates texture and color.
5. Consider each building as a high-quality, long-term addition to the neighborhood; exterior design and materials should exhibit permanence and quality appropriate to the Capitol Hill neighborhood.
6. The use of applied foam ornamentation and EIFS (Exterior Insulation & Finish System) is discouraged, especially on ground level locations.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the Recommendation meeting, the Board unanimously recommended the project return for another meeting in response to the guidance provided.