



City of Seattle

Department of Construction & Inspections
Nathan Torgelson, Director



FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3021273

Address: 4426 4th Avenue Northeast

Applicant: Hugh Schaeffer, S+H Architects

Date of Meeting: Monday, March 28, 2016

Board Members Present: Ivana Begley (Chair)
Eric Blank
Laura Lenss
Blake Williams

Board Members Absent: Julia Leavitt

SDCI Staff Present: Crystal Torres

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial (NC3-40)

Nearby Zones: (North) Neighborhood Commercial (NC3P-40)
(South) Single Family (SF 5000)
(East) Neighborhood Commercial (NC3P-40)
(West) Neighborhood Commercial (NC3P-40)

Lot Area: 5,535 square feet



Current Development:

The mid-block site currently contains a two-story single family home.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The site is located just south of Northeast 45th Street and 4th Avenue Northeast in the Wallingford Neighborhood. The subject site is located in a transition zone (NC3-40) between the Neighborhood Commercial zoned 45th street and the Single Family (SF 5000) zoning located directly to the south of the subject site. The surrounding area to the north is characterized by commercial uses along 45th street and 1-2 story single family homes to the south along 4th Avenue NE.

Access:

The site does not currently propose on-site parking, therefore no vehicular access is proposed. Pedestrian access is provided along 4th Avenue Northeast.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

There are no mapped Environmentally Critical Areas onsite.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant is proposing two 4- story townhouse structures containing a total of 8 residential units. Existing structure to be demolished.

The design packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3021273) 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

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PUBLIC COMMENT

Several members of the public were in attendance at this meeting and offered the following comments:

- Concerned with the proposed design not being compatible in scale with the surrounding single family homes.
- Concerned with the proposed design not fully addressing the transitional nature of the site.
- Concerned with the building massing not fully responding to the architectural character of the street.
- Concerned with proposed narrow access/circulation corridors.
- Concerned with an increase in traffic and lack of parking associated with the proposed development.
- Expressed greater support for the design schemes without a stair tower.
- Concerned with the impacts to privacy and suggested providing an appropriate buffer.

All public comments submitted in writing for this project can be viewed using the following link and entering the project number: <http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/edms/>

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. Height, Bulk, Scale/Massing and Design.** The Board supported moving forward with scheme C.1 provided their concerns related to the height, bulk, and scale of the proposed design are further resolved (**CS2-D**). The Board supported Scheme C.1 and provided the following guidance:
 - a. The Board agreed with the public comments and directed the Applicant to further explore the architectural language of the surrounding residential homes and to utilize these architectural cues, specifically fenestration size/pattern, as well as, choosing materials with legible scale/texture to further enhance the residential character/scale of the proposed project. **CS2-B; CS3-A; DC2-B; DC2-C; DC2-D; DC4-A; (Wallingford) CS2-IV; DC2-II**
 - b. Also echoing public comments on responding to context, the Board suggested breaking up the glazing to relate more to the pattern residential homes along the street. **CS3-A; (Wallingford) DC2-II**

- c. The Board had similar concerns as the public related to privacy impacts and suggested utilizing secondary architectural elements to further provide privacy to adjacent homes. **DC2-A-2; DC2-B; DC2-C**
- d. The Board discussed exploring a modern interpretation of surrounding rooflines, or utilizing datum lines to create a greater registration of porch entries, fenestration, rooflines etc. relating the proposed design to adjacent homes. **CS2-C; CS3-A; (Wallingford) CS2-IV; CS3-I**
- e. For the next meeting, the Board directed the Applicant to provide more information on proposed materials, secondary architectural elements, and fenestration pattern. The Board discussed the need for these building elements to enhance the residential scale and character of the design. **CS2-D; DC2-B; (Wallingford) CS2-IV**

2. Site Plan.

- a. The Board agreed with the public comment and supported the site plan of Scheme C.1 as this option provided a greater setback in relation to the location of the single family home on the adjacent lot to the south. In this scheme, the proposed project pulls the massing back where the existing single family home is closest to the property line. **DC2-A**
- b. The Board discussed the need to provide a strong buffer along the southern property line in response to the privacy of and bulk impacts to the adjacent single family home **DC4-II**
- c. The Board discussed the benefit of the existing retaining wall to provide substantial screening and privacy. If the retaining wall is to be removed, a screen wall of high quality materials should be utilized to maintain a high level of privacy for the neighbors and residents of the proposed project. **DC2-III**
- d. Board members discussed and advocated for the potential of the consolidated landscaping presented in scheme C.1 to provide a more substantial landscape area and buffer. **DC4-II**
- e. However, the Board expressed concerns with the patios near the south property line and directed the applicant to provide more information on how screening would be provided by both a wall and landscaping. **CS2-D-5**
- f. The Board expressed some concern related to walkways, entries, and access. The Board directed the Applicant to further resolve access and to confirm accessibility requirements as this may require significant site plan design changes. **PL2-D; PL3-B**
- g. The Board suggested exploring staggered entries to enhance the circulation opposed to consolidated entries. **PL3-A; DC1-A**
- h. The Board supported the location of the trash enclosure along the north property line. However, the Board expressed concerns with location of the enclosure adjacent to the entry. The Board directed the applicant to provide more information related to how the trash would be screened and the pedestrian experience would be resolved.
- i. The Board directed the Applicant to further resolve the entry gate/security and to identify materials. **PL2-B; PL3-B**

- j. The Board discussed the importance of creating a residentially scaled street frontage through a comprehensive design of entry, entry stairs, landscaping etc.
DC2-C, DC4-D

3. Transition. The Board acknowledged the public comments related to the development of this site and commented that this project was a precedent building due to the transitional nature of the project site. The cubic form of the proposed massing is similar to commercial buildings of similar scale, however the building should also reflect a residential character to aide in creating a more seamless transition from the commercial character along 45th Avenue into the single family character along 4th Avenue. **CS2-D**

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-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-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.

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.

Wallingford Supplemental Guidance:

CS2-IV Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility

CS2-IV-i. Rooflines: Cornice and roof lines should respect the heights of surrounding structures.

CS2-IV-vii. Height Modulation: Consider additional setbacks, modulation and screening to reduce the bulk where there are abrupt changes, which increase the relative height above grade along the street or between zones.

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-2. Contemporary Design: Explore how contemporary designs can contribute to the development of attractive new forms and architectural styles; as expressed through use of new materials or other means.

CS3-A-3. Established Neighborhoods: In existing neighborhoods with a well-defined architectural character, site and design new structures to complement or be compatible with the architectural style and siting patterns of neighborhood buildings.

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.

Wallingford Supplemental Guidance:

CS3-I Architectural Context

CS3-I-i. Complement positive existing character: Complement or respond to nearby pre-World War II structures. Traditional early 20th Century commercial structures are primarily one story.

CS3-I-ii. Contextual Design Approach: New buildings should strive for a contextual approach to design. A contextual design approach is not intended to dictate a historicist approach, but rather one that is sensitive to surrounding noteworthy buildings elements.

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.

PL2-D Wayfinding

PL2-D-1. Design as Wayfinding: Use design features as a means of wayfinding wherever possible.

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-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.

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-B-2. Ground-level Residential: Privacy and security issues are particularly important in buildings with ground-level housing, both at entries and where windows are located overlooking the street.

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-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-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-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.

Wallingford Supplemental Guidance:

DC2-II Human Scale

DC2-II-ii. Paned Windows: Multiple paned windows that divide large areas of glass into smaller parts are preferred because they add human scale.

DC2-II-iii. Durable Materials: Use durable and well-detailed finish materials:

- a. Finish materials that are susceptible to staining, fading or other discoloration are strongly discouraged.
- b. Encourage the use of brick.
- c. Discourage aluminum and vinyl siding, and siding with narrow trim.

DC2-III Retaining Walls

DC2-III-i. Retaining Wall Surface: Where retaining walls are unavoidable, a textured surface, inlaid material and/or sensitively designed reveal lines are encouraged.

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

Wallingford Supplemental Guidance:

DC4-II Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site

DC4-II-i. Planted Visual Buffers: Thick evergreen hedges, non-invasive vines on fencing or low walls, and other substantial landscaping should be used to visually and physically buffer sidewalks and adjacent buildings from parking areas; camouflage exposed concrete walls; and buffer adjacent single-family houses and residential developments.

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 Early Design Guidance the following departures were requested:

1. **Side Setback Abutting Residential Zone (SMC 23.47A.014.B.3):** The Code requires 15' setback above 13' up to 40' in height. The applicant proposes 13'-6" maximum setback and 6' minimum setback above 13' to 40' with an average setback of 9'-6" for the combined 92' façade length of both buildings.

The Board indicated preliminary support for this departure provided the Applicant further resolves the height, bulk, and scale issues associated with the proposed design. As discussed, this would be achieved with materials, fenestration, and secondary architectural elements, as well as, creating a substantial landscape buffer along with the maintained retaining wall. In addition, providing more information on glazing and exploring how secondary architectural elements could provide more privacy.

2. **Side Setback Abutting Residential Zone (SMC 23.47A.014.B.3):** The Code requires an additional 2' setback for every 10' in height above 40'. The applicant proposes a 9'-6" average setback for an additional 1'-6" above 40' in height.

The Board indicated preliminary support for this departure provided the Applicant further resolves the height, bulk, and scale issues associated with the proposed design. As discussed, this would be achieved with materials, fenestration, and secondary architectural elements, as well as, creating a substantial landscape buffer along with the maintained retaining wall. In addition, providing more information on glazing and exploring how secondary architectural elements could provide more privacy.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application.