



DESIGN GUIDANCE STREAMLINED DESIGN REVIEW

Project Number: 3021901

Address: 325 N 90th St

Applicant: Peter Tallar of Caron Architecture LLC

Date of Report: Tuesday, February 23, 2016

DPD Staff: Magda Hogness

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Lowrise (LR3)

Nearby Zones: (North) Single Family (SF 5000)
(South) LR3
(East) LR3
(West) NC20-40

Lot Area: The current lot area is 14,126 sf.
A lot boundary adjustment under project number 3021587 is currently underway to reconfigure the lot lines running east- west to north-south.
The current proposal assumes the site of Parcel A which is 7,739 sf.



Current Development:

The site is currently occupied with a single-family residence, detached vacant garage and a duplex.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The sites are located within the Greenwood-Phinney Residential Urban Village. The uses along the Greenwood Ave N corridor are primarily commercial to the south, transitioning to a mix of multi-family and commercial near the intersection with N 90th St and to the north. To the east and west of the corridor are single-family residences.

Adjacent to the west is a five story mixed use building constructed from reinforced concrete. Directly to the south is a three story condominium building. To the east, across Phinney Ave N, is a four story condominium building. Across N 90th St to the north, is a one-story single-family structure. Two four story, apartment buildings are proposed to the northwest; one containing 28 residential units, under project # 3019797, and the other containing 37 residential units, under project # 3018316.

Access:

Vehicular access is currently from N 90th St and Phinney Ave N.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a 7-unit, 3 story townhouse structure and parking for 5 vehicles. The existing structures are proposed to be removed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following public comment was received:

- Concerned about potential impact to stormwater management. Stormwater is an issue in this area, both for anadromous fish and for neighboring buildings.
- The condo building directly adjacent to the west has problems with stormwater incursions into the parking garage and water pooling.
- Concerned with the eviction of the current tenants.
- Concerned about the amount of units proposed.
- Concerned that a significant tree has been cut down without a permit.
- 90th St is a steep narrow and highly used traffic corridor. Would like to see access taken from Phinney Ave N.
- Concerned with the number of proposed projects occurring simultaneously and the resulting noise, traffic, parking, and safety impact on neighborhood.
- Would like to see more parking proposed.

- Would like to see the amount of units decreased to 4-5 units to allow for more permeable surface for stormwater, additional planting and outdoor space.
- Concerned with the construction of multi-unit complexes without improving the infrastructure, such as sidewalks, wider streets, etc.
- Would like the City to consider parking enforcement and or permits.
- Would like the City to consider changing Phinney Ave between 85th Street and 90th Street to a one way street with diagonal parking.
- Would like to see the public transportation system improved.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and public comment, the Design Review Planner provided the following siting and design guidance. The Planner identified the Citywide Design Guidelines & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

- 1) **Natural Systems and Site Features:** Mature vegetation may provide necessary buffering, and should inform the project design. Vehicular access to the site is proposed via one curb cut near the north property line. It appears a retaining wall is proposed, running parallel with the driveway. Provide more information about the height and treatment of this wall and consider the impacts to the root zones and canopies of the adjacent trees. Avoid a large blank retaining wall and the removal of adjacent trees. Include trees that overhang the property boundary on the landscape plan. (CS1-D-1, CS2-D-2)
- 2) **Walkability, Wayfinding and, Street-Level Interaction:** The design has the potential to create a physical and visual connection to the street. Staff stressed the importance of the transition from the street to the entries. (CS2-B-2, PL2-D-1, PL3-A-4, PL3-B-4)
 - a. For the unit facing the street, reorient/add a walkway to provide a direct connection to the street. Provide stoops or other usable space for the users. (CS2-B-2, PL2-D-1., PL3-A-4., PL3-B-4)
 - b. Primary entries should be obvious, identifiable, and distinctive. Incorporate wayfinding, create a more welcoming entry to the side walkway, and show how bike parking and addressing will be incorporated. Study widening the entry sequence, flaring the stairs, or creating an intermediary stoop at the street to strengthen the connection to the street. (CS2-B-2, PL2-D-1., PL3-A-4., PL3-B-4)
 - c. Include lighting where appropriate to give a sense of security to walkways, parking areas, and entries without glaring lights. Provide a lighting plan. (PL2-B-2, DC4-C)
- 3) **Architectural Concept:** Thoughtful design and material treatment of all the facades are warranted to provide a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings. (DC2)

- a. The east façade is well composed; the one foot deep fascia wrap breaks down the perceived scale and bulk of the entire structure and provides a compelling composition. The north, west and south facades appear unresolved, and do little to respond to the adjacent context and minimize the perceived bulk. Resolve these facades with strong, intentional moves that provide visual depth and are reinforced by material applications. (CS2-D, DC2-A-2., DC2-B-1., DC2-C-2, DC2-D)
 - b. Reduce the height of the stair penthouses to the minimum necessary to reduce the perceived height and mass. (CS2-D, DC2-A-2)
 - c. Further refine the secondary architectural elements including railings and roof details to create a quality project. The open metal railing minimizes the perceived height of the structure and should be continued around to the east as visible from the street. Study the roof fascia thickness and consider one uniform thickness to strengthen the overall composition. (CS2-D, DC2-A-2, DC2-B-1, DC2-C-2, DC2-D)
- 4) **Open Space Concept:** Consider the location amenity areas and landscape buffers. Design the site plan to balance circulation with amenity areas. Incorporate sufficient landscaping along all facades to accommodate a varied and lush planting palette; soften the rectilinear masses where they meet grade; and provide a pleasant pedestrian experience. (PL1-B, PL1-C, DC3-A-1, DC3-C-2, DC4-D)
- 5) **Materials:** Further explore strategies to demarcate individual units to further break down the perceived scale and bulk and improve the overall composition. (DC2-A-2, DC2-B-1, DC2-D-2, DC4-A-1)
- a. Revise the materials and composition of the north, west and south elevations to demonstrate a coherent design composition that breaks down the bulk and scale of each façade and relates changes in plane to the material application and overall design concept. (DC2-A-2, DC2-B-1, DC2-D-2, DC4-A-1)
 - b. The proposed wood material relates well to the residential use, should be carried forward in the final design. For the north façade, study expanding the wood material upward to strengthen the composition and place prominence on the street facing façade. Consider the use of other high-quality and durable materials, especially at points of interest. (DC2-A-2, DC2-B-1, DC2-D-2, DC4-A-1)
 - c. Clarify proposed colors and materials. Materials should reflect a fine-grained level of detail and articulation. Joints should relate to fenestration patterns and be considered as part of the overall composition. (DC2-A-2, DC2-B-1, DC2-D-2, DC4-A-1)

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines are summarized below. 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-D Plants and Habitat

CS1-D-1. On-Site Features: Incorporate on-site natural habitats and landscape elements into project design and connect those features to existing networks of open spaces and natural habitats wherever possible. Consider relocating significant trees and vegetation if retention is not feasible.

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-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-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-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-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.

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-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-4. Interaction: Provide opportunities for interaction among residents and neighbors.

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

DC1-C-3. Multiple Uses: Design parking areas to serve multiple uses such as children’s play space, outdoor gathering areas, sports courts, woonerf, or common space in multifamily projects.

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-2. Reducing Perceived Mass: Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of larger projects.

DC2-B Architectural and Façade Composition

DC2-B-1. Façade Composition: Design all building façades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all façades are attractive and well-proportioned.

DC2-C Secondary Architectural Features

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-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.

DC3 Open Space Concept: Integrate open space design with the building design so that they complement each other.

DC3-A Building-Open Space Relationship

DC3-A-1. Interior/Exterior Fit: Develop an open space concept in conjunction with the architectural concept to ensure that interior and exterior spaces relate well to each other and support the functions of the development.

DC3-C Design

DC3-C-2. Amenities/Features: Create attractive outdoor spaces suited to the uses envisioned for the project.

DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.

DC4-A Building Materials

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-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.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD ADJUSTMENTS

Design Review Staff's recommendation on the requested adjustment(s) will be based upon the adjustment's potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the adjustment(s).

At the time of Design Guidance, the following adjustments were requested:

- 1. Front Setback (23.45.518 TABLE A):** The Code requires a 7' average and 5' minimum front setback. The applicant proposes a front setback of 6.25'

SDCI staff indicated they would not be supportive of the adjustment as there is no modulation along this north façade and the reduced setback does not respond or align with adjacent buildings. Additionally, for this area improving visibility to minimize the conflict between vehicles and non-motorists is especially important and a reduced setback would decrease visibility. The adjustment does not clearly achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure.

- 2. Rear Setback (23.45.518 TABLE A):** The Code requires a 7' average and 5' minimum rear setback. The applicant proposes a rear setback of 5.79'

SDCI staff indicated they would not be supportive of the adjustment as shown but would consider an adjustment request if visible depth and modulation along this façade and the north facade is developed. As shown, the adjustment does not clearly achieve a better overall design.

STAFF DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the Design Guidance, the DPD Staff recommended the project should move forward to building permit application in response to the Design Guidance provided.

1. Please be aware that this report is an assessment on how the project is meeting the intent of the Design Guidelines. This review does not include a full zoning review. Zoning review will occur when the MUP plans and/or building permit is submitted. If needed and where applicable, SDR adjustments may be requested in response to zoning corrections.
2. If applicable, please prepare your Master Use Permit for SEPA review with a thorough zoning analysis listing the 23.45 and SMC 23.54 code section criteria, showing both required and proposed information (include page number where you graphically show compliance). You may want to review Tip 201 (<http://web1.seattle.gov/dpd/cams/CamList.aspx>) and may also want to review the MUP information here:
<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/permits/permittypes/mupoverview/default.htm>
3. Along with your building permit application, please include a narrative response to the guidance provided in this report.
4. All requested adjustments must be clearly documented in the building permit plans.