



## DESIGN GUIDANCE STREAMLINED DESIGN REVIEW

Project Number: 3022021

Address: 732 Belmont Place E

Applicant: Steve Bull, workshop AD

Date of Report: Monday, February 29, 2016

SDCI Staff: BreAnne McConkie, Land Use Planner

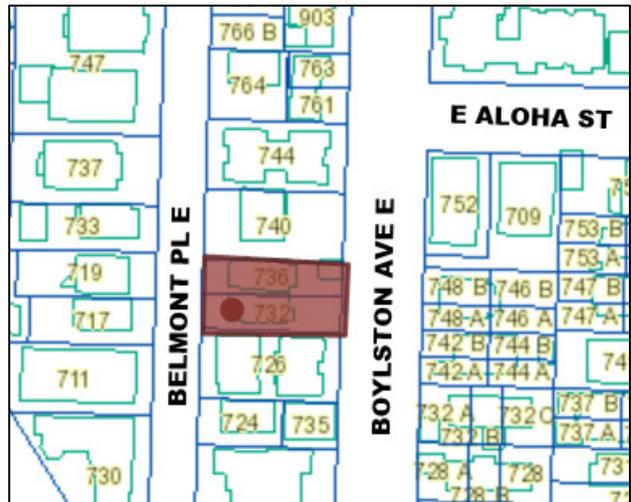
### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Low Rise 3 (LR3)

Nearby Zones: (North) LR3  
(South) LR3  
(East) LR3  
(West) LR3

Lot Area: 7,200 SF

**Current Development:** The project site, consisting of two through-block parcels with frontage on both Belmont Pl E and Boylston Ave E, contains two wood-frame duplexes built in 1903. The site contains a number of trees and shrubs including an exceptional Japanese Maple and slopes from the east down to the west with a more notable slope along the western portion adjacent to the Belmont Pl E right of way.



**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:** The site is within the Capitol Hill Urban Center Village and just outside of the Harvard-Belmont Landmark District, which wraps to the north, south, and west. The neighborhood is made up of a mix of single family structures and multifamily buildings ranging from converted historic mansions to multi-family apartment, condominiums, and townhouses.

**Access:** Current vehicular access to the site is from Boylston Ave E. Proposed vehicular access is from Belmont Pl E.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:** The site does not contain any mapped Environmentally Critical Areas.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Streamline Design Review for 8 townhouse units with underground parking for 10 vehicles. Two existing structures to be demolished.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

The public comment period commenced on January 7, 2016. Several public comments were received and are summarized below:

- Desire for mature vegetation onsite to be preserved.
- The project should go through full design review and the public comment period should be longer to allow for more public input.
- If located in a Historic District, the District should have development guidelines.
- Historic single family structures should be preserved.
- Historic architectural vocabulary, including scale, mass, setback, materials, exterior details, construction methods, façade height and width, and proportions, should be considered and should be drawn from the historic buildings in this district so that any new structure fits into the character of the neighborhood and is in sympathy with existing historic structures.
- New development in the area is often featureless rectilinear blocks that are not always in scale with the surrounding structures and are not complimentary in terms of building materials, construction methods, or planned longevity as the adjacent buildings.
- The building height should not exceed 3 stories from the existing grade.
- The building materials and colors should be required to be compatible with the neighborhood.
- Utilities should be underground.
- Garbage, bicycle racks should be provided on the interior of the building.
- One and one-half off-street parking spaces should be provided for each unit.
- New sidewalks and new curb should be built.
- Sewer capacity should be reviewed and if sewer lines are pre-1950 the contractor should contribute to a new line.
- The dwelling should be single family and not small efficiency dwelling units.
- Concerned with window placement and privacy of adjacent development.

## PRIORITIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

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

### 1. Entries, Access, & Relationship to Street.

- a. The entry orientation and direct relationship between units A, B, and C to Boylston Ave E is consistent with Design Guidelines CS2-B-2, CS2-I-iv, and PL3-B-1 and should be maintained. Specifically, the landscape buffer adjacent to the sidewalk, raised stoops and entries, and high levels of transparency at grade should be carried through to the final design. **(CS2-B-2, CS2-I-iv, PL3-B-1)**
- b. The existing Exceptional Tree, a Japanese Maple, is a notable on-site natural feature and works well as a buffer and should be preserved. Note, development will be required to meet the SMC 25.11 Tree Protection Code and compliance will be reviewed at Building Permit stage. **(CS2-D-2, DC3-II-iii)**
- c. Staff does not support the design of the Belmont PI E edge as shown, specifically the lack of physical and visual connection between the units adjacent to the street (units F, G, and H), blank wall condition at grade, and internal unit orientation.

The design should be modified to include a direct connection between the street and adjacent units. This could be achieved by shifting the parking structure further east and including entries to units F and H at or near street level, including additional setback along the western edge with traditional stoops, and or exploring options for street trees to be located in the planting strip with the use of Silva Cell or alternative planting options.

At a minimum, the landscape should be terraced to create a more successful transition between the development and the streetscape and emulate the existing historic berm landscaping pattern along the streetscape and strategies to reduce the blank wall must be incorporated. **(CS2-B-2, CS2-I-iv, CS2-I-v, DC2-B-2, DC3-II-i)**

- d. The common entry to the courtyard from the street should be further developed and enhanced to make it welcoming and easily identifiable for visitors while minimizing potential negative impacts to neighboring properties through strategically placed landscaping and/or other screening methods. **(PL2-A-1, PL2-III-I, PL3-B-1, CS2-D-5)**
- e. The internal access route to and from the parking garage should be enhanced to maximize natural light and visibility and should include pedestrian-scaled down

lighting with the intent of maximizing safety and enhancing the pedestrian entry sequence from the parking to the individual units. (PL2-III-I, PL2-A-1)

**2. Amenity Space & Architectural Concept and Context**

- a. Staff is concerned the internal, covered amenity space will not be successful due to the lack of natural light and air, potential negative impacts on the units above, and overall bulk created by the central units.

Alternative siting or configuration of the massing should be explored to create more usable amenity space that better responds to the proposed adjacent uses and reduces the overall bulk in the proposed “courtyard.”

The applicant must demonstrate how the central amenity space will function as a successful open space and should provide details on the lighting, soffit, landscape/hardscape, stairs/railings, and all proposed secondary architectural features. (CS1-B-2, PL3-B-1, DC3-B-1, DC3-B-2)

- b. The applicant should look to historic neighborhood cues for ways to further break down the massing, better delineate the individual units, and successfully fit within the neighborhood context. (CS2-C-2, CS3-A-1, CS3-A-3, DC4-II-i)
- c. Staff supports the use of high quality, wood siding as the primary material. Quality materials are consistent with neighborhood specific Design Guideline DC4-II-I, and should be included in the final design. (DC4-II-I, CS3-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-B Sunlight and Natural Ventilation**

**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.

**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-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-5. Respect for Adjacent Sites:** Respect adjacent properties with design and site planning to minimize disrupting the privacy of residents in adjacent buildings.

**Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:**

**CS2-I Streetscape Compatibility**

**CS2-I-iii. Entrances:** Vehicles entrances to buildings should not dominate the streetscape

**CS2-I-iv. Townhouse Orientation:** Orient townhouse structures to provide pedestrian entrances to the sidewalk

**CS2-I-v. Multiple Frontages:** For buildings that span a block and “front” on two streets, each street frontage should receive individual and detailed site planning and architectural design treatments.

**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-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.

**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-A Accessibility**

**PL2-A-1. Access for All:** Provide access for people of all abilities in a manner that is fully integrated into the project design. Design entries and other primary access points such that all visitors can be greeted and welcomed through the front door.

**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-iii. Ingress/Egress:** Building entrances should emphasize pedestrian ingress and egress as opposed to accommodating vehicles.

**PL2-III Personal Safety and Security**

**PL2-III-i. Lighting/Windows:** Consider

- a. pedestrian-scale lighting, but prevent light spillover onto adjacent properties
- b. architectural lighting to complement the architecture of the structure
- c. transparent windows allowing views into and out of the structure—thus incorporating the “eyes on the street” design approach.

**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.

**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.

**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 Facade Composition**

**DC2-B-2. Blank Walls:** Avoid large blank walls along visible façades wherever possible. Where expanses of blank walls, retaining walls, or garage facades are unavoidable, include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians.

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

**DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities**

**DC3-B-1. Meeting User Needs:** Plan the size, uses, activities, and features of each open space to meet the needs of expected users, ensuring each space has a purpose and function.

**DC3-B-2. Matching Uses to Conditions:** Respond to changing environmental conditions such as seasonal and daily light and weather shifts through open space design and/or programming of open space activities.

***Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:***

**DC3-II Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions**

**DC3-II-i. Aesthetic Consistency:** Maintain or enhance the character and aesthetic qualities of neighborhood development to provide for consistent streetscape character.

**DC3-II-iii. Onsite Trees:** Incorporate street trees in both commercial and residential environments in addition to trees onsite.

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

**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.

***Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:***

**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.
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.

## DEVELOPMENT STANDARD ADJUSTMENTS

Design Review Staff's recommendation on the requested adjustment 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.

At the time of Design Guidance, the following adjustment was requested:

- 1. Façade Length (SMC 23.45.527.B.1):** The Code limits the maximum combined length of all portion of facades within 15 ft. of a lot line to no greater than 65% of the length of the lot line (maximum of 78' when applied to this site). The applicant proposes a façade length of 81'-4" (67.8% of the length of the lot line).

SDCI staff recognized the entry bays allowed for spatially distinct entries and a greater visual connection to the common pedestrian access path but is concerned the requested adjustment will result in additional bulk without the benefit of distinct entries visible from the Belmont public right of way and additional bulk within the site. Staff would be inclined to support the adjustments if the Belmont streetscape and amenity area issues outlined in the guidance above were resolved consistent with Design Guidelines CS2-B-2 and DC3-B-1.

## 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.