



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE SOUTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3022717

Address: 3039 SW Avalon Way

Applicant: Steve Fischer, NK Architects

Date of Meeting: Thursday, February 18, 2016

Board Members Present: Todd Bronk, Chair  
Donald Caffrey  
T. Frick McNamara  
Matt Zinski

Board Members Absent: Alexandra Moravec

SDCI Staff Present: BreAnne McConkie, Land Use Planner

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Midrise (MR)

Nearby Zones: MR (North)  
MR (South)  
MR/Lowrise 1 (East)  
MR/Single Family 5000 (West)

Lot Area: 12,340 SF

#### Site Characteristics & Current Development:

The site, located midblock on the east side of SW Avalon Way, contains a 2-story duplex and has a notable slope from west down to east with a number of trees and large bushes including vegetation along the west and southwest property line. A platted alley dead ends at the southeast corner of the site, however it is currently used as surface parking for neighboring properties and contains a rockery and



vegetation towards the northern portion of the alley.

**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:** The development along SW Avalon Way is somewhat transitional with an increasing number of newer mid-rise buildings concentrated along the Avalon corridor as well as some older duplexes and low-rise development. Transitioning away from the Avalon corridor, the neighborhood consists of single family development to the west and a mix of single family and low-rise residential buildings to the east.

SW Avalon Way is a moderately busy arterial street connecting the Junction to the West Seattle Bridge and includes a number of bus routes, including the Rapidride C Line, as well as a bike lane that serves as a primary bicycle route to and from West Seattle.

**Access:** Existing vehicle access to the site is from SW Avalon Way. Proposed vehicle and pedestrian access to the site is from Avalon Way.

At EDG, the Applicant also proposed a code compliant option with no parking and therefore no vehicle access as well as an option with vehicle access from the adjacent under improved alley.

**Environmentally Critical Areas (ECAs):** There are no mapped ECAs onsite.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Design Review Early Design Guidance to allow a six-story apartment building containing 71 residential units and 21 below grade parking stalls. Existing structure to be demolished.

The design packet includes materials 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](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE February 18, 2016

### PUBLIC COMMENT

At EDG, several members of the public were present. One speaker provided the following comments:

- Questioned why departures would be justified if they were only for the marketability of the project.

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.

#### EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE February 18, 2016

- 1. Vehicular Access, Solid Waste Storage, & Safety:** The Board discussed vehicular access and solid waste pick-up from SW Avalon Way at length and noted that safety was the primary concern due to SW Avalon Way being an arterial street with several bus routes, notable vehicular traffic, a well-used bicycle route, and a number of pedestrians. **(DC1-B-1, DC1-C-2, DC1-C-4, PL4-A-1, CS1-C-1)**
  - a. There is a strong preference for solid waste servicing to be from the alley if possible and the applicant should explore solid waste servicing options from the alley. **(DC1-B-1, DC1-C-4, CS1-C-1).**
  - b. If solid waste servicing from the alley is not possible, the Board would support servicing from SW Avalon Way if it could be done in a way that was safe and minimized potential vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian conflicts to the maximum extent feasible. The logistics and staging should be well thought out and fully integrated into the design to maximize safety and minimize aesthetic impacts on the right-of-way. If possible, staging should be pulled back from the property line. **(DC1-B-1, DC1-C-4)**
  - c. The Board deferred to the SDCI director and SDOT on the vehicular access, as safety was the primary concern and aesthetically the design of street access could be resolved by softening the access entry with landscaping and human scale detailing. **(CS1-C-1, DC1-B-1, DC1-C-2, DC1-C-4, PL4-A-1)**
- 2. Massing & Architectural Concept:** The Board unanimously supported the Applicant's preferred option, Option C, noting the front setback, east/west unit orientation, at-grade streetscape relationship, and massing articulation resulted in an overall simple and successful composition.

- a. The 11' ground level setback created a desirable streetscape relationship, setting a precedent for future adjacent development, and should be maintained. **(CS2-C-2, CS2-D-2, PL3-B-1, PL3-B-2)**
- b. The expression of materials should reinforce the concept diagram shown on page 17 of the EDG packet, with simple, high quality materials expressing the larger forms and clear transitions between the masses. **(CS2-III-iii, DC2-A-2, DC2-B-1&2, DC2-I-ii, DC4-A-1)**
- c. The Board cautioned that the preferred massing option was less successful than the concept diagram and stated that the massing and material composition should articulate the larger masses, vertical gaskets, and a strong base, as shown in the concept diagram. **(CS2-III-iii, DC2-A-2, DC2-B-1&2, DC2-I-ii)**
- d. Because the north and south facades would have less transparency and greater blank wall area, the design of these walls should be well thought out with high quality detailing of the materials to break up the facades. **(DC2-A, DC2-B-1, DC2-B-2, DC2-D, DC4-A-1)**
- e. The blank concrete wall at the base should be detailed in a way that provided texture and scale, specifically along the north, south, and especially the east façade due to its overall height and exposure. Landscaping alone would not be adequate to address the blank base facades. **(DC2-A, DC2-B-1, DC2-B-2, DC2-D, DC4-A-1)**

**3. Landscape & Open Space:** The Board unanimously supported the conceptual landscaping and open space plan and noted that it should stay true to what was presented at EDG. **(DC4-all)**

## 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-1. Land Form:** Use natural topography and desirable landforms to inform project design.

**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-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-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.

***West Seattle Supplemental Guidance:***

**CS2-III Height, Bulk and Scale**

**CS2-III-i. Zoning Context:** Applicant must analyze the site in relationship to its surroundings. This should include:

- a. Distance from less intensive zone; and
- b. Separation between lots in different zones (property line only, alley, grade changes).

**CS2-III-ii. New Development in NC zones 65' or Higher:**

- a. Patterns of urban form in existing built environment, such as setbacks and massing compositions.
- b. Size of Code-allowable building envelope in relation to underlying platting pattern.

**CS2-III-iii. Facade Articulation:** New buildings should use architectural methods including modulation, color, texture, entries, materials and detailing to break up the façade—particularly important for long buildings—into sections and character consistent with traditional, multi-bay commercial buildings prevalent in the neighborhood’s commercial core (see map 1, page 1).

**PUBLIC LIFE**

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

**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.

## **PL4 Active Transportation: Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.**

### **PL4-A Entry Locations and Relationships**

**PL4-A-1. Serving all Modes of Travel:** Provide safe and convenient access points for all modes of travel.

### **PL4-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists**

**PL4-B-1. Early Planning:** Consider existing and future bicycle traffic to and through the site early in the process so that access and connections are integrated into the project along with other modes of travel.

**PL4-B-2. Bike Facilities:** Facilities such as bike racks and storage, bike share stations, shower facilities and lockers for bicyclists should be located to maximize convenience, security, and safety.

**PL4-B-3. Bike Connections:** Facilitate connections to bicycle trails and infrastructure around and beyond the project.

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

**DC2-D Scale and Texture**

**DC2-D-1. Human Scale:** Incorporate architectural features, elements, and details that are of human scale into the building façades, 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.

***West Seattle Supplemental Guidance:***

**DC2-I Architectural Concept and Consistency**

**DC2-I-i. Integrate Upper-Levels:** New multi-story developments are encouraged to consider methods to integrate a building’s upper and lower levels. This is especially critical in areas zoned NC-65’ and greater, where more recent buildings in the Junction lack coherency and exhibit a disconnect between the commercial base and upper residential levels as a result of disparate proportions, features and materials. The base of new mixed-use buildings – especially those zoned 65 ft. in height and higher – should reflect the scale of the overall building. New mixed-use buildings are encouraged to build the commercial level, as well as one to two levels above, out to the front and side property lines to create a more substantial base.

**DC2-I-ii. Cohesive Architectural Concept:** The use and repetition of architectural features and building materials, textures and colors can help create unity in a structure. Consider how the following can contribute to a building that exhibits a cohesive architectural concept:

- a. facade modulation and articulation;

- b. windows and fenestration patterns;
- c. trim and moldings;
- d. grilles and railings;
- e. lighting and signage.

## **DC2-II Human Scale**

**DC2-II-i. Pedestrian-Oriented Facades:** Facades should contain elements that enhance pedestrian comfort and orientation while presenting features with visual interest that invite activity.

## **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-A-2. Climate Appropriateness:** Select durable and attractive materials that will age well in Seattle’s climate, taking special care to detail corners, edges, and transitions.

### **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.

### **DC4-E Project Assembly and Lifespan**

**DC4-E-1. Deconstruction:** When possible, design the project so that it may be deconstructed at the end of its useful lifetime, with connections and assembly techniques that will allow reuse of materials.

## **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

The Board’s recommendation on the requested departures 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 departures. 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. **Driveway Sight Triangles (SMC.23.54.030.G.5):** The Code requires driveways adjacent to a side lot line to start 5' from the lot line. The applicant proposes the driveway meet the sidewalk at the lot line with no side setback.

The Board indicated concern with the requested departure noting that additional detail was needed to ensure it provided safe circulation and resulted in a higher quality design. The departure may be supported if it was deemed safe and the drive area was softened with landscaping and human scale detailing of the driveway and ramp area including paving, wall treatment, lighting, and railing consistent with Design Guidelines DC1-B-1-Access Location and Design, DC2-D-1-Human Scale, and DC2-D-2-Texture.

2. **North Upper Level Setback (SMC 23.45.518.B):** The Code requires a 7' minimum and 10' average setback above 42'. The applicant proposes a 7'-6" minimum and 8'-3" average setback along the north façade above 42', resulting in 1'-9" less than the required average setback above 42'.

The Board indicated preliminary support for the requested setback noting that it resulted in a more simplified and intentional massing and a better overall building composition consistent with Design Guidelines DC2-A-Massing and DC2-B-Architectural and Facade Composition.

3. **South Upper Level Setback (SMC 23.45.518.B):** The Code requires a 7' minimum and 10' average setback above 42'. The applicant proposes a 7'-5" minimum and 7'-5" average setback along the south façade above 42', resulting in 2'-7" less than the required average setback above 42'.

The Board indicated preliminary support for the requested setback noting that it resulted in a more simplified and intentional massing and a better overall building composition consistent with Design Guidelines DC2-A-Massing and DC2-B-Architectural and Facade Composition.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### BOARD DIRECTION

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