



## DESIGN GUIDANCE STREAMLINED DESIGN REVIEW

Project Number: 3022861

Address: 716 N Allen Place

Applicant: Alicia Arsene

Date of Report: Tuesday, February 16, 2016

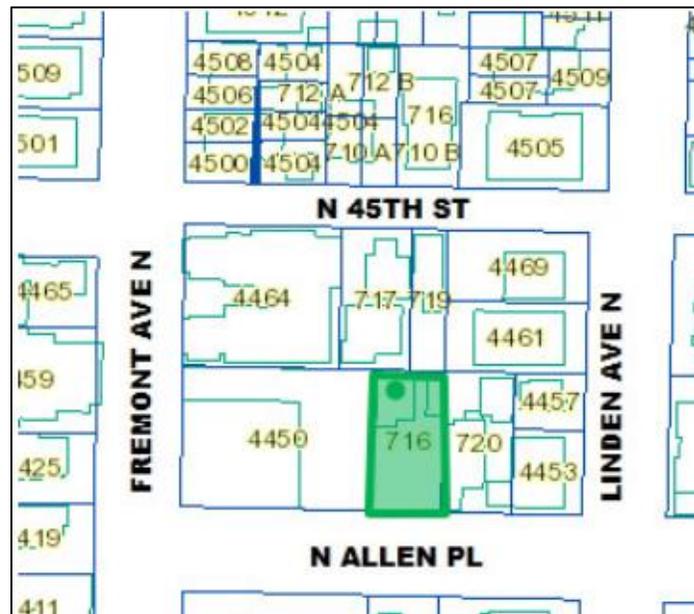
DPD Staff: Katy Haima

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Lowrise 3 (LR3)

Nearby Zones: (North) LR3  
(South) LR2  
(East) LR3  
(West) NC2P-40

Lot Area: 5,000 sq. ft.



**Current Development:**

The site is currently occupied with a one-story single-family residence and detached garage.

**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

Surrounding development is a mix of traditional craftsman single-family residences, and multi-family developments of various ages. Uses on Fremont Ave N, to the east of the site, are a mix of commercial and multi-family residential.

Immediately to the west of the site is a one-story commercial structure with surface parking. To the north of the site is a three-story multi-family structure and a one-story single family structure. To the west is a three-story multi-family structure. To the south of the site across N Allen Place are is a traditional two-story residential structure.

**Access:**

Access is via a curb cut on N Allen Place. There is no alley access to the site.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:**

None.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposal is for two, 2-unit townhouses for a total of 4 units and below grade parking for 8 vehicles.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following public comment was received:

- Concerned about shadowing of adjacent residences.
- Concerned about impact to property value.
- Concerned about potential impact to stormwater management due to increase of impervious surfaces.
- Concerned about impact to laurel trees near north property line.
- Noted general north/north-west wind patterns, and expressed concern over potential of garage exhaust blowing into neighboring yards.
- Concerned about impacts from construction noise.
- Concerned about the size of parking stalls proposed.

**PRIORITIES & STAFF 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 (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

- 1. Massing and Response to Context.** Strategies should be used to reduce the perceived height, bulk and scale and express a residential scale and character that sets a precedent for the evolving streetscape. (CS2.B, CS2.C, CS2.D, CS3.A, DC2.A)
  - a. Care should be taken to design the east and west facades to minimize views into abutting residential uses. Clarify the size, location, and type of windows shown. Obscured glazing, landscaping, and fencing ought to be used to mitigate privacy impacts to neighbors.
  - b. 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.
  - c. Show the south elevation of the structure with the adjacent uses for context. The massing and design should transition from the commercial scale and character on Fremont Ave to a more residential character and scale to the east.
  - d. There is a lack of modulation on the east and west facades, which does little to respond to the adjacent uses and minimize the perceived height, bulk and scale. Revise these facades to incorporate modulation that provides relief in the massing. This is more critical for the east façade; however, the pedestrian experience along the walkway on the west should be taken into consideration.
  - e. Demonstrate how the vegetation on adjacent sites is being considered, especially the trees and large shrubs to the north. Mature vegetation may provide necessary buffering, and should inform the project design. Include trees that overhang the property boundary on the site plan, and consider the impacts to the root zones and canopies.
  
- 2. Site Plan & Open Space.** Consider the location of transitional spaces, amenity areas and landscape buffers. Design the site plan to balance circulation with amenity areas, and to provide comfortable, pedestrian-friendly walkways and open spaces. (CS2.D, PL1.C, DC1.A, DC1.B, DC1.C, DC2.A, DC3.A, DC3.B, DC4.D)
  - a. The stairs to the parking garage located in the middle of the site break up the primary amenity space on site, and do not provide a welcoming entry into the garage. Relocate or remove the stairs from this location. Consider providing an entry to the garage at street level. This may help to strengthen the relationship of the development to the street, and work to relieve the blank wall condition.
  - b. The amount of impervious surfaces appears overwhelming, and the spaces provided are dedicated to circulation as opposed to actual amenity space for the users. It appears that the ambitiousness of the program has relegated the open space to leftover spots instead of defining the relationship of the structures to one another. Revise and reconfigure the entries and pathways as necessary to minimize the amount of walkways and to create usable open spaces for each residence. Remove the stairs in the center, expand the landscaping, and provide

walkways from each unit to one central path, instead of two. On the north façade, consider shifting the doors to the corners, and providing planting in the middle.

- c. Explore strategies to use landscaping and hardscaping to further demarcate unit entries.
- d. Show a plan of the parking garage. Arrange the mass of the garage to minimize the appearance of the garage.

**3. Design Concept & Architectural Composition.** Continue to explore the proposed articulated building forms, materials and architectural elements to show interior uses and to create a modern building language, reduce the perceived bulk and height, and express a residential character. (CS1.C, CS2.B, CS2.D, CS3.A, PL3.A, PL3.C, DC1.B, DC1.C, DC2.A, DC2.B, DC2.C, DC3.A, DC3.B, DC4.A)

- a. The design appears to lack a clear expression of concept or composition. There are many small moves that appear unrelated and do not have a clear rationale. Continue to refine the composition, especially on the south façade, to simplify the massing with strong, intentional moves that are reinforced by the material application. It is unclear if the expression of each portion of the massing is intended to be vertical or horizontal. Provide a clear design concept that expresses an overarching composition.
- b. Explore strategies to further break down the height, bulk and scale by demarcating each unit or each floor with modulation and changes in design language or materials. Consider utilizing a lighter color at the upper floor. Lower the slats of the trellis to minimize the perceived height.
- c. The proposed wood material relates well to the residential use, and should be carried forward in the final design. Consider the use of other high-quality and durable materials, especially at points of interest such as entries, and along narrow walkways to provide an appropriate level of detail. Large panels are not appropriate for a small-scaled pedestrian walkway.
- d. Revise the architectural composition of the south façade to incorporate cues from the established context and grade change to break down the perceived height, bulk and scale. Strategies could include material changes that differentiate the base from the upper massing; incorporating shed or pitched roofs or framing elements; relating to the datum lines on the adjacent buildings. Explore strategies to demarcate individual units further break down the perceived scale and bulk and improve the overall composition.
- e. Clarify proposed colors and materials, and demonstrate a thoughtful application of materials as they relate to the overall massing and architectural composition, and help the development relate to the established context. Materials should relate to the residential neighborhood, and reflect a fine-grained level of detail and articulation. Joints should relate to fenestration patterns and be considered as part of the overall composition.
- f. Revise the materials and composition of the west and east elevations to demonstrate a coherent design composition that breaks down the bulk and scale

of the façade and relates changes in plane to the material application and overall design concept.

- g. As proposed, the fenestration does not appear to relate to an organizing principle or internal uses. Revise the design to incorporate an adequate level of transparency into a well-balanced façade composition.

- 4. Entry Sequences and Streetscape Design.** Primary entries should be obvious, identifiable, and distinctive with clear lines of sight and visually connected to the street. The entry sequence should be secure and welcoming, and relate to the established streetscape and contribute to the character of the neighborhood. (CS2.B, CS3.A, PL2.B, PL2.D, PL3.A, PL3.B, DC1.C, DC2.B, DC2.C, DC4.A, DC4.D)
- a. Incorporate wayfinding for the rear units. Create a more welcoming entry to the side walkway, and show how addressing will be incorporated at the street level. This could be done by widening the entry sequence, flaring the stairs, or creating an intermediary stoop at the street to strengthen the connection to the street.
  - b. Improve the connection of the front entries to the street. If possible, reorient the steps up to provide direct connections, and provide stoops or other usable space for the users.
  - c. Continue to explore façade compositions and massing moves that increase the prominence of the entries without relying on color.
  - d. Revise the street-level design to resolve the blank wall condition. A green wall or trellis is not a sufficient strategy to provide a comfortable and pleasant pedestrian experience. Lower the entire massing to reduce the height of the blank wall (and provide a slight ramp down to the parking), or explore strategies to incorporate terracing and transitional volumes in the interstitial space to soften the grade change. The landscaping at the streetscape should be lush and layered. As mentioned above, consider relocating a pedestrian entry to the garage at grade. These elements could be used to create a more welcoming entry and establish a relationship between the structure and the public realm.
  - e. The garage door material should be high-quality and durable, appropriately scaled and detailed for the pedestrian realm, tie into the overall theme or design, and blend into the base.
  - f. Design features such as gates, fences, or awnings are used as a means of wayfinding to the main entry. These elements should be detailed, customized, and/or personalized. Include in the plan set information describing the awnings, canopies, fence, gate, and lighting.

## DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

<b>CONTEXT &amp; SITE</b>
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**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-B-2. Connection to the Street:** Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and public realm.

**CS2-B-3. Character of Open Space:** Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**PL2-A-2. Access Challenges:** Add features to assist pedestrians in navigating sloped sites, long blocks, or other challenges.

**PL2-B Safety and Security**

**PL2-B-1. Eyes on the Street:** Create a safe environment by providing lines of sight and encouraging natural surveillance.

**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-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-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.

**PL3-B-4. Interaction:** Provide opportunities for interaction among residents and neighbors.

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

**PL4-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists**

**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.

## 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-2. Gathering Places:** Maximize the use of any interior or exterior gathering spaces.

**DC1-A-3. Flexibility:** Build in flexibility so the building can adapt over time to evolving needs, such as the ability to change residential space to commercial space as needed.

**DC1-A-4. Views and Connections:** Locate interior uses and activities to take advantage of views and physical connections to exterior spaces and uses.

#### **DC1-C Parking and Service Uses**

**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-C Secondary Architectural Features**

**DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest:** Add depth to façades 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-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-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.

**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-1. Reinforce Existing Open Space:** Where a strong open space concept exists in the neighborhood, reinforce existing character and patterns of street tree planting, buffers or treatment of topographic changes. Where no strong patterns exist, initiate a strong open space concept that other projects can build upon in the future.

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

**DC3-C-3. Support Natural Areas:** Create an open space design that retains and enhances onsite natural areas and connects to natural areas that may exist off-site and may provide habitat for wildlife.

**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-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-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 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, no adjustments were requested:

**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.