



# City of Seattle

Department of Construction and Inspections  
Nathan Torgelson, Director



## DESIGN GUIDANCE STREAMLINED DESIGN REVIEW

Project Number: 3022891

Address: 4716 38th Avenue South

Applicant: Julian Weber of Weber Architects

Date of Report: Monday, March 28, 2016

SDCI Staff Present: Carly Guillory, Land Use Planner

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Lowrise 3 (LR3)

Nearby Zones: (North) LR3  
(South) LR3  
(East) Single Family (SF 5000)  
(West) Neighborhood Commercial (NC2-65)

Lot Area: 5,034 square feet

### Current Development:

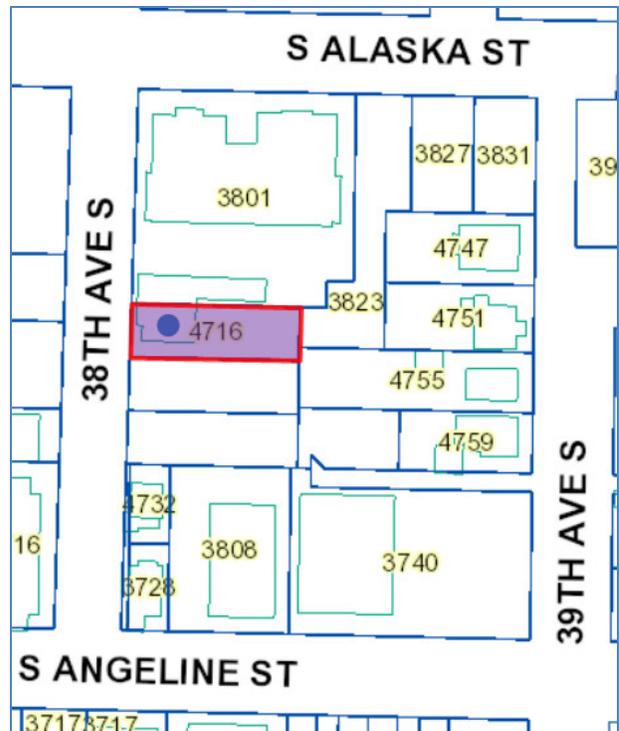
The subject site currently contains one single-family structure.

### Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

Surrounding development consists of a mix of single- and multiple-family structures between two and three stories. The block front includes a variety architectural styles that include mid-century, late 20<sup>th</sup> century, craftsman, and modern. There is a variety of roof lines, detailing, and application of materials.

### Access:

Pedestrian access to the site 38<sup>th</sup> Ave S.



## Environmentally Critical Areas:

None.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Streamlined Design Review application proposing a 4-story structure containing 32 small efficiency dwelling units. Parking for 32 bikes to be provided in basement level. Existing structure to be demolished.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

The public comment received described concerns about the building height, shadow impacts, and impacts to on-street parking.

## 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 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.

## DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

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

1. **Site Planning.**
  - a. The site contains six existing trees; the arborist report submitted identifies these trees by name, size, and condition. None of the trees qualify for Exceptional status per Director's Rule 16-2008.
  - b. The proposal utilizes the existing topography by positioning the building such that the main entry is elevated above the sidewalk, while the basement units are slightly below the sidewalk. Ensure a robust landscape plan is provided between the ramp and the sidewalk to soften the concrete retaining wall/entry ramp and emphasize a human scale experience (PL1-A, DC2-D, DC4-D).
  - c. The front staircase and ramp is described as providing space and opportunity for resident interaction, landscaping, and paving features. It appears a tree is proposed within the ramp area. Include in the plan set details describing the proposed landscaping and paving materials proposed for this area (PL1-A, DC2-D, DC4-D).
  - d. The main entry faces north, and is not immediately recognizable while viewing the west façade. Ensure the main entry is obvious and identifiable with a coordinated elements such as signage, lighting, and materials (PL1-B, PL2-B, PL3-A, PL4-A).
  - e. The walkway along the south property line is to be lined with lighting. Ensure lighting creates a safe and secure pathway. Include in the plan set details describing the proposed lighting (PL2-B).

- f. A stair tower is proposed at the southeast portion of the building. Ensure lighting in this stair tower is respectful of adjacent development and avoids glare or light impacts to neighboring properties (DC4-C).
2. **Massing and Architectural Concept.**
- a. The architectural concept describes the utility and design of the stair tower that provides light and detail in addition to functionality. Precedent images are included on page eight, and describe the staircase as a type of lightbox or light tower. Include in the plan set details describing the materials and lighting proposed for the staircase (DC4-A, DC4-C)
  - b. An awning is used to identify the main entry and is lined with a cedar soffit. Maintain this textured material to ensure an obvious and identifiable primary entry (PL4-A).
  - c. The main residential lobby is accessed via the north and has windows facing the street to the west. The lobby appears to be treated with wood siding to respond to human scale and distinguish it as a shared space. Maintain this material differentiation to further identify the main entry and distinguish it from the more private areas of the project (PL4-A, DC4-A).
  - d. Units are proposed at the ground level along the south property line. Include in the plan set information describing this entry sequence and measures taken to ensure residential unit privacy and security (PL1-B, PL3-C).
  - e. The solid waste and recycling storage area is proposed at the northwest portion of the site, and appears screened and covered. This location is not ideal due to concerns regarding odor and impacts to the pedestrian walkway to the basement level units. Consider enclosing the storage area to reduce impacts to the shared pedestrian walkway (DC1-C).

**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-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.

**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-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-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.

**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-A-2. Connections to All Modes:** Site the primary entry in a location that logically relates to building uses and clearly connects all major points of access.

**PL4-C Planning Ahead For Transit**

**PL4-C-1. Influence on Project Design:** Identify how a transit stop (planned or built) adjacent to or near the site may influence project design, provide opportunities for placemaking.

**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-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-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.

**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-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-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-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-4. Multifamily Open Space:** Design common and private open spaces in multifamily projects for use by all residents to encourage physical activity and social interaction.

**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-1. Scale and Character:** Add interest to the streetscape with exterior signs and attachments that are appropriate in scale and character to the project and its environs.

**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 requested adjustment(s) is 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, two adjustments were requested.

1. **Side Setback, North (SMC 23.45.518):** The Code requires a side setback of seven-foot average, five-foot minimum. The applicant proposes an average setback of 6.7-feet.

SDCI staff indicated that the reduction in average setback allows for a shared walkway and gracious front entries for five residential units and visual access to the lit stair tower. This departure is supported (DC2-B, DC4-A, DC4-C).

2. **Side Setback, South (SMC 23.45.518):** The Code requires a side setback of seven-foot average, five-foot minimum. The applicant proposes an average setback of 6.7-feet.

SDCI staff indicated that the reduction in average setback along the south property line results in a walkway and entry sequence that feels underwhelming. Explore setting back the residential lobby further to accentuate the shared primary entry and lobby. Consider amenities such as seating, landscaping, or other area for residents to pause and interact. This departure is not supported in the design as depicted.

**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.