



# City of Seattle

Department of Construction and Inspections  
Nathan Torgelson, Director



## FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

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Project Number: 3023032, 3023583, & 3023584

Address: 1804 E. Spruce St., 208 & 212 18<sup>th</sup> Ave.

Applicant: Julian Weber, JW Architects for Isola Homes

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, April 27, 2016

Board Members Present: Natalie Gualy  
Amy Taylor  
Barbara Busetti  
Curtis Bigelow  
Dan Foltz  
Christina Orr-Cahall

Board Members Absent: None

SDCI Staff Present: Josh Johnson

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### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: A 19,200 sq. ft. site zoned Low Rise 2 (LR2)



**Nearby Zones and Development:**

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| North: Single-family (SF 5,000) | A two-story triplex and a single-story single-family residence |
| South:LR2                       | Two and three-story, multi-family structures                   |
| East: LR2                       | Boys and Girls Club, a two-story institutional building        |
| West:LR2                        | A single-story, single-family residences                       |

**Current Development:**

The site, currently occupied by a single story brick apartment building with an internal courtyard is relatively flat with a rise in topography occurring at the sidewalk.

**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

The neighborhood is a mixture of multi-family and single-family residential. Newer buildings tend to be three stories in height. Bus stops located along Yesler and Jefferson Streets can be found within ¼ mile of the site. Two parks, Squire Park and the Spruce Street Mini Park, are also within walking distance. Community resources in the area include the Boys and Girls Club and Garfield High School.

**Access:**

Pedestrian access is achieved through a network of existing sidewalks. Vehicular access is provided by a driveway at the northwest corner of the site.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:**

None are present.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The project proposal comprises 21 rowhome and townhome units with 21 surface parking spaces.

The design packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3023032, 3023583, & 3023584) 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)

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### PUBLIC COMMENT

Members of the public offered comments:

- The project should recreate the feel of the existing building.
- Open space should be usable by residents.
- Stoops should be more substantial, similar to precedent images in the packet and historic apartment buildings.
- The proposed buildings are out of scale with the neighborhood.
- The penthouse stairs should be reduced to limit the height of the structure.

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.

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- 1. Massing:** The Board observed that the three presented massing options were too overbearing with respect to neighboring uses. Option One was favored by the Board with the following guidance informed by the public comments provided:
  - a. The mass of the structures is overbearing and should be eroded to reduce the visual impact of the upper floors. (CS2-A,C, &D)
  - b. The bulk should be further reduced by using a more transparent parapet. (DC2-B)
  - c. The penthouse stairs should be more internal to each structure to reduce the height of the buildings. (DC2-A)

- d. Future renderings should clearly show the upper two floors. The graphics currently show the upper part of the massing ghosted in and these need to be clearly readable and understood. (DC2-A)

**2. Site Design.** The Board’s discussion of the site focused on the lack of connection to the amenity space and the design of the stoops. The following guidance was emphasized:

- a. There is a lack of connection between the townhomes and the amenity area and an integrated site plan is essential. Units along the eastern property line should be connected to amenity areas and have less isolated pedestrian circulation. (PL1-A, B, &C, PL2-A)
- b. Stoops should clearly mark residential entries while providing a large enough landing areas for a gathering space. (PL4-A)
- c. Residences should be grouped together and separated from the parking to create more cohesive residential spaces as shown in Option One. (DC1-B&C)
- d. The design should clearly commit to either large stoops or a larger amenity space, not a half measure of each. (DC3-A, B, & C)

**3. Context.** The Board stated concerns that the three massing options do not respond to their surroundings or existing site conditions.

- a. The existing building’s character should be acknowledged in the project’s design through the use of similar material or proportions. (CS3-A&B)
- b. Landscape buffers should be included to the east for the Boys and Girls Club and the north bordering single-family residences. (CS2-B & DC4-D)
- c. The Board wants to see perspectives from the street at the second EDG Meeting to better understand the project’s relationship to its surroundings. (PL3-A & B)
- d. The applicant should use high-quality materials. One option is to use brick, a material present on the existing building. (DC4-A)

## 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](#).

|                           |
|---------------------------|
| <b>CONTEXT &amp; SITE</b> |
|---------------------------|

**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-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-1. Corner Sites:** Corner sites can serve as gateways or focal points; both require careful detailing at the first three floors due to their high visibility from two or more streets and long distances.

## **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-3. Zone Transitions:** For projects located at the edge of different zones, provide an appropriate transition or complement to the adjacent zone(s). Projects should create a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zone and the proposed development.

**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.

## **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.

### **CS3-B Local History and Culture**

**CS3-B-1. Placemaking:** Explore the history of the site and neighborhood as a potential placemaking opportunity. Look for historical and cultural significance, using neighborhood groups and archives as resources.

**CS3-B-2. Historical/Cultural References:** Reuse existing structures on the site where feasible as a means of incorporating historical or cultural elements into the new project.

## **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-1. Enhancing Open Space:** Design the building and open spaces to positively contribute to a broader network of open spaces throughout the neighborhood.

**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.

**PL1-C-3. Year-Round Activity:** Where possible, include features in open spaces for activities beyond daylight hours and throughout the seasons of the year, especially in neighborhood centers where active open space will contribute vibrancy, economic health, and public safety.

### **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.

**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.

**PL3-B-3. Buildings with Live/Work Uses:** Maintain active and transparent facades in the design of live/work residences. Design the first floor so it can be adapted to other commercial use as needed in the future.

**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-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.

## 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-B-2. Facilities for Alternative Transportation:** Locate facilities for alternative transportation in prominent locations that are convenient and readily accessible to expected users.

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

**DC1-C-1. Below-Grade Parking:** Locate parking below grade wherever possible. Where a surface parking lot is the only alternative, locate the parking in rear or side yards, or on lower or less visible portions of the site.

**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.

**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 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.

**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-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.

**DC3-B-3. Connections to Other Open Space:** Site and design project-related open spaces to connect with, or enhance, the uses and activities of other nearby public open space where appropriate.

**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-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 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-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.

## **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) 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 departure(s). The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

At the time of the **FIRST** Early Design Guidance the following departures were requested:

1. **Driveway Width (SMC 23.54.030.D.1.b):** The Code requires that driveways more than 100 feet in length that serve 30 or fewer parking spaces shall either:
  - 1) be a minimum of 16 feet wide, tapered over a 20 foot distance to a 10 foot opening at the lot line; or
  - 2) be a minimum of 10 feet wide and provide a passing area at least 20 feet wide and 20 feet long. The passing area shall begin 20 feet from the lot line, with an appropriate taper to meet the 10 foot opening at the lot line. If a taper is provided at the other end of the passing area, it shall have a minimum length of 20 feet.

The applicant requests a driveway width of 14' 6" into the site without a taper or 20' x 20' passing area.

The Board preliminarily favored this departure to reduce the appearance of an auto-oriented project and potential to increase amenity area. (DC1-B) The illustrations of the departure on page 35 show, however, that it would allow an extra unit if granted. The Board noted that the applicant will need to bolster this departure request with more guideline based justifications and illustrations showing how the additional density or mass would further better design and respond to the EDG guidance provided on page 3 and 4 of this report.

2. **Sight Triangle (SMC 23.54.030.G.1):** The Code requires a sight triangle be provided on both sides of the driveway be kept clear of any obstruction for a distance of 10 feet from the intersection. The applicant proposes a sight triangle on only one side of the driveway.

The Board favored the departure as strict application of the code would require a larger throat for the access easement increasing the appearance of a vehicle oriented development. (DC1-A&B)

- 3. Raise from Sidewalk to Building (SMC 23.45.518.H.5):** The Code states, if setbacks are required pursuant to subsection 23.45.518.A.1, unenclosed porches or steps no higher than 4 feet above existing grade, or the grade at the street lot line closest to the porch, whichever is lower, may extend to within 4 feet of a street lot line, except that portions of entry stairs or stoops not more than 2.5 feet in height from existing or finished grade whichever is lower, excluding guard rails or hand rails, may extend to a street lot line. See Exhibit C for 23.45.518. Unenclosed porches or steps above existing grade may project into the required rear setback or required separation between structures a maximum of 4 feet provided they are a minimum of 5 feet from a rear lot line. Unenclosed porches or steps permitted in required setbacks and separations shall be limited to a maximum width of 20 feet. The applicant proposes more than 2.5 feet in height from existing grade within four feet of a street lot line.

The Board wanted to see a better stoop design before weighing in on this departure request as outlined in the guidance elaborated earlier in the report. (DC3-A)

## **BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended the project return for another meeting in response to the guidance provided.