City of Seattle

Department of Construction & Inspections
Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN REVIEW

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE WEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Numbers:	3023582, 3024408, 3024407
Address:	3406 15TH AVE W (3023582) 3410 15TH AVE W (3024408) 3416 15TH AVE W (3024407)
Applicant:	Jonathan Lemons, Lemons Architecture
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, July 06, 2016
Board Members Present:	Boyd Pickrell, Chair Christine Harrington Katie Idziorek Homero Nishiwaki Janet Stephenson
Board Members Absent:	None
SDCI Staff Present:	BreAnne McConkie

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial 3 with a 40' height limit (NC3-40)

Nearby Zones: NC3-40 (North)
NC3-40 (South)
Lowrise 3 Residential Commercial (LR3 RC)(East)
Seattle Mixed-Dravus with a 40' height limit for commercial/85' height limit for residential (SM-D 40-85)(West)

Development Site Area: 17,128 sq. ft.

Current Development: The project site contains two single family structures.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character: The site is located in the Interbay area and abuts 15th Ave W, a major north-south arterial that is primarily auto-oriented at this location. The surrounding development is made up of mid- to late- 20th century multi-family structures to the north, south, and east. Further east the zoning transitions from LR3 to LR1.

The site contains a notable slope from east down to west as it nears 15th Ave W. It currently contains mature vegetation, including an exceptional tree, and a large billboard. W Bertona St. is located one parcel to the south and is a stair climb with pedestrian access only.

Access: Vehicular access to the site is located from the alley. Pedestrian access is from both the alley as well as 15th Ave W.

Environmentally Critical Areas: The site contains an ECA steep slope and ECA Potential area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

3023582: Design Review Early Design Guidance for 2, 4-unit townhouse buildings with surface parking for 5 vehicles located on the site. Functionally related to projects 3024407 and 3024408 for pedestrian and vehicle access. Pending lot boundary adjustment #3024168.

3024408: Design Review Early Design Guidance for two, townhouse structures with a total of 6 units. Surface parking for 5 vehicles will be located on the site. Functionally related to projects 3023582 and 3024407 for pedestrian and vehicle access. Pending lot boundary adjustment #3024168.

3024407: Design Review Early Design Guidance for two, townhouse structures with a total of 7 units. Surface parking for 5 vehicles will be located on the site. Functionally related to projects 3023582 and 3024408 for pedestrian and vehicle access. Pending lot boundary adjustment #3024168.

The design packet includes information 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 SDCI:

Mailing Address: **Public Resource Center**
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE July 6, 2016

PUBLIC COMMENT
There were no public comments offered at the meeting.

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.

1. **Massing & Siting:** The Board supported the preferred scheme, scheme 3, because of the sophistication of the forms and breaking up the overall massing, resulting in a scale compatible with the existing development to the east. The Board provided the following guidance:
    a. The asymmetry of preferred scheme and stepped massing created vertical interest and should be maintained and further developed. The vertical complexity and horizontal simplicity should be resolved in a graceful way that is consistent with an overall architectural concept. (**DC2-A, CS1-C, CS3-A**)
    b. The Board supported the overhangs because they added architectural interest and more livable spaces, and responded better to the ground level conditions. (**DC2-A, CS1-B, CS1-C**)
    c. Departures related to reducing the rear (east) setback (including parking stall size and backing distance) should be explored to accomplish the following:
        i. Increased setbacks along the west adjacent to 15th Ave W to create a desirable landscaped buffer and more livable space; and
        ii. Increased building separation along the central north-south spine with the inclusion of an at-grade gathering function to create a more comfortable and communal space. The Board emphasized the building separation did not have to be uniform across the entire site. (**CS1-B, PL1-B, PL2-B, DC2-A-1, DC1-B-1**)
    d. The generous setback along 15th Ave W should be equal to or greater than what was presented in the preferred scheme considering the nature of the right-of-way and resulting "green belt" adjacent to the right-of-way. (**CS1-C, CS2-B-1&3**)

2. **Landscaping, Circulation, & Ground Plane**.
    a. The Board expressed strong support for preserving of the Exceptional tree on site and noted they would not be inclined to support its removal. (**CS1-D**)
    b. The Board stated that enhancing the pedestrian realm on 15th Ave W should be a priority and provided the following related guidance:
        i. Shift the retaining wall adjacent to the sidewalk to the east to provide a minimum of 2 additional feet of sidewalk width. Stated a preference for a

planted landscape strip between the sidewalk and street if feasible and encouraged the applicant to work with SDOT to achieve this buffer area.

ii. The main hill-climb should be exciting and interesting, with a generous grand stair and widened opening (10' minimum) near the street to provide additional relief for the pedestrian realm. A bike runnel should be included if feasible. (**PL1-B, PL3-A, PL4-B-3, DC4-D, DC2-A-1**)

c. The landscaped hillside should be terraced and incorporate different landscape characters, to provide visual variety and relate to both the buildings and the right-of-way, as was suggested in the presentation and in the EDG packet (pg. 25).

   Overall, the landscape gestures and stairs should integrate seamlessly with the proposed sophisticated, modern architecture of the building. The Board noted the sculpture garden as an example of landscape design that successfully achieves this integration.

   In order to add interest and mitigate the slope, explore angling and/or staggering the retaining walls further to break down the length of the site and better relate to the building massing and siting. (**DC4-D**)

d. The Board noted that the number of internal pedestrian paths seemed a bit excessive, specifically the northern and southern most stairs because they only appeared to each serve one to two units and would be relatively inactive, creating safety concerns. Consider eliminating the north and south stairs and expanding the other shared circulation routes to create a clear hierarchy and enhanced entry sequence/sense of arrival. (**PL1-B, DC2-A-1, DC4-C, DC4-D, PL3-A, PL2-B**)

3. Materiality & Architectural Expression:

a. The Board supported the early architectural expression presented and noted that this project should set a precedent for future projects in the area, specifically cautioning against the more commonly used fiber cement panel with cedar accent. (**CS3-A-2&4, DC2-A-2, DC4-A-1**)

b. The project should include a high level of sophistication in materiality to express the simple massing forms. Materials should be high quality and help to resolve the vertical complexity while reinforcing the sophisticated, modern architectural expression. (**CS3-A-2&4, DC2-B-1, DC2-B-2, DC2-D-2, DC4-A-1**)

c. The Board noted that in addition to the street facing façades, the north and south facades and corners would be highly visible since they will be proud of the adjacent buildings and therefore should be well thought out. (**DC2-B-1, DC2-B-2**)

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

At the time of Early Design Guidance, no departures were requested.

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines identified 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-B Sunlight and Natural Ventilation

CS1-B-1. Sun and Wind: Take advantage of solar exposure and natural ventilation. Use local wind patterns and solar gain to reduce the need for mechanical ventilation and heating where possible.

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.

CS1-B-3. Managing Solar Gain: Manage direct sunlight falling on south and west facing facades through shading devices and existing or newly planted trees.

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

CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes

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-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

PL1 Connectivity: Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.

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.

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-2. Lighting for Safety: Provide lighting at sufficient lumen intensities and scales, including pathway illumination, pedestrian and entry lighting, and/or security lights.

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.

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-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.

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-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.

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-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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application.