City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development
Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN REVIEW

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number:	3023900
Address:	3824 Aurora Ave. N.
Applicant:	Robert Humble for Hybrid Architecture
Date of Meeting:	Monday, July 11, 2016
Board Members Present:	Ivana Begley Eric Blank James Marria
Board Members Absent:	Blake Williams
SDCI Staff Present:	Josh Johnson

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone:	Commercial (C1-40)
Nearby Zones:	(North) C1-40 (South) C1-40 (East) Low Rise (LR3) (West) C1-40
Lot Area:	27,746 sq. ft.

Current Development:

The development site is comprised of three parcels at the southeast corner of Aurora Ave N. and N. 39th St. Two are occupied by a commercial building while the corner parcel is vacant.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

Aurora Ave N forms a narrow strip of commercially zoned corridor. The properties further from Aurora transition to Low Rise then Single Family zones. Development along this block is mostly comprised of older single-family homes and some pockets of three to four story mixed-use and multi-family development. Aurora is divided in this location.

Access:

Vehicular access occurs at the alley. There are existing sidewalks along Aurora.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

There are no ECA conditions present.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a 4-story structure containing 141 residential units, six live-work units and parking for 65 vehicles. Existing structures to be demolished.

The design packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3023900) 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

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PUBLIC COMMENT

The following public comments were received:

- The alley (Winslow Place) is used for pedestrian movement and should be designed for safety.
- The reduced level of parking may lead to congestion on 39th Street.
- The ground level should be designed for site security due to the presence of transients.
- Vehicles should come in from Aurora.
- The west facing façade will be exposed to the sun and may be quite hot.
- Art should be integrated into the project.
- The applicant should consider artist lofts for live/work units or alley facing units.
- Roof deck should be designed to maintain privacy for homes to the east.

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:**
    a. The Board favored Option 3 due to the three distinct masses defined by large courtyards and alley setbacks that allow for ample penetration of natural light into residential units. (CS1-B & DC3-B)
    b. The Board strongly supported the randomized window patterns shown in precedent images and discussed by the applicant. (DC2-B)

2. **Aurora Façade:** The Board noted the harsh pedestrian conditions along Aurora due the road speed and lack of parallel parking that could act as a buffer.
    a. The Board lauded the high level of detail shown on Aurora façade and liked the layering of planters and open space courtyards. (DC-4)
    b. Gates and lighting along Aurora are necessary for security, but should be well designed and integrated into the overall composition of the building. (PL2-B & DC4-C)
    c. The Board acknowledged that the public comment noted a preference for vehicular access from the street and not alley. The Board clarified, however, that street access from Aurora is not possible due to the busy nature of the major arterial street and the zoning code. (DC1-C)

d. The Board would support smaller windows or other departures on the Aurora façade to make the live/work units more pleasant. Larger screening from planters and additional ground level setbacks could reduce impacts from Aurora. (PL3-B&C)

3. **Winslow Façade:** The Board agreed that the alley should be designed to encourage pedestrian movement and slower vehicular travel for safety. Character sketches of pedestrian experience at the alley should be included at the Recommendation phase.
   a. The Board acknowledged public comments about the alley's use for pedestrian travel and agreed that the alley should be treated more like a woonerf to reduce impact from vehicles. (CS2-C)
   b. SDOT wants paving to property line. The Board recommended pursuing a different paving type nearest building to delineate a place for pedestrians or consider a sidewalk on the applicant's side of the alley. (CS2-B)
   c. Units facing the alley could have stoops to create a residential character and alert motorists to drive slower. In response to public comment, the Board acknowledged that ground level artist lofts facing the alley could be an interesting use. (PL3-A)
   d. A mural along the alley façade could be used to reinforce its residential nature.
   e. The Board encouraged moving the vehicle entrance to north courtyard to move it closer to 39th Street, consolidating motorist activity. A steeper ramp departure would be supported to accomplish this change. (DC1-C)

4. **39th Street:**
   a. The Board agreed that to the maximum extent possible, the trees on 39th specifically the Chestnut Tree, should be preserved. (DC4-A)
   b. The lobby is located on 39th Street and this façade should emphasize the residential entry and character. Wayfinding for the lobby should be an aspect of the more detailed recommendation materials. (PL4-A & DC4-B)

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-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.

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-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-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-C-3. Full Block Sites: Break up long facades of full-block buildings to avoid a monolithic presence. Provide detail and human scale at street-level, and include repeating elements to add variety and rhythm to the façade and overall building design.

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-B-3. Street-Level Transparency: Ensure transparency of street-level uses (for uses such as nonresidential uses or residential lobbies), where appropriate, by keeping views open into spaces behind walls or plantings, at corners, or along narrow passageways.

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.

PL3-C Retail Edges

PL3-C-1. Porous Edge: Engage passersby with opportunities to interact visually with the building interior using glazing and transparency. Create multiple entries where possible and make a physical and visual connection between people on the sidewalk and retail activities in the building.

PL3-C-2. Visibility: Maximize visibility into the building interior and merchandise displays. Consider fully operational glazed wall-sized doors that can be completely opened to the street, increased height in lobbies, and/or special lighting for displays.

PL3-C-3. Ancillary Activities: Allow space for activities such as sidewalk vending, seating, and restaurant dining to occur. Consider setting structures back from the street or incorporating space in the project design into which retail uses can extend.

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-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-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-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.

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-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-B-2. Coordination with Project Design: Develop a signage plan within the context of architectural and open space concepts, and coordinate the details with façade design, lighting, and other project features to complement the project as a whole, in addition to the surrounding context.

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.

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 Early Design Guidance the following departures were requested:

1. **Commercial Depth (SMC 23.47A.008):** The Code requires 30 feet of average depth for ground level commercial uses. The applicant proposes 26 feet of depth to reduce the building's mass along the alley.

   The Board indicated this departure could be supported since the reduced live/work depth allowed for more visual relief at the east side of the project near lower scale residential uses. (CS2-B)

2. **Commercial Floor to Floor Height (SMC 23.47A.008):** The Code requires a floor to floor height of 13 feet for non-residential ground level uses. The applicant proposes 11 feet of floor to floor height for a portion of the structure. This is due the property's slope and the desire to match live/work entries with the grade of corresponding courtyards.

   The Board indicated supported this departure and felt the live/work units should relate more to the adjacent grade of the courtyards. By having their entrances from the courtyard, the harsh conditions along Aurora are further mitigated. (DC1-A)

3. **Residential Sidewalk Separation (SMC 23.47A.008):** The Code requires ground level residential uses to be at least four feet above or below the sidewalk, or have a setback of at least 10 feet. The applicant did not dimension this departure, but illustrations show

the area requiring the departure to be minimal. They justified the lack of sidewalk separation through the possible use of landscaping to screen and buffer the units.

The Board indicated support for this departure as 39th Street is a slower, quieter street where the separation required by Code is less important. They felt with careful application of landscaping and buffer area, the unit's privacy could be maintained.

BOARD DIRECTION

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