



# City of Seattle

Department of Construction and Inspections  
Nathan Torgelson, Director



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

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Project Number: 3024131

Address: 12705 30<sup>th</sup> Ave NE

Applicant: Runberg Architects for the Low Income Housing Institute

Date of Meeting: Monday, June 13, 2016

Board Members Present: Ivana Begley  
Joe Hurley, substitute  
Blake Williams

Board Members Absent: Eric Blank  
Julia Levitt

SDCI Staff Present: Josh Johnson

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### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Commercial (C1-65)

Nearby Zones: (North) C1-65  
(South) C1-65  
(East) C1-65  
(West) C1-65

Lot Area: 16,835 sq. ft.



### **Current Development:**

The site is occupied by a decommissioned fire station.

### **Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

The site is located at the northwest intersection of 127<sup>th</sup> St and 30<sup>th</sup> Ave NE. Surrounding uses include the back of a strip commercial development to the east, a car dealership to the south, a fire station to the west, and an office building to the north. In general, there are a variety of uses present in the overall neighborhood as depicted on pg. 12 of the EDG packet. The Lake City Civic Core and a Festival Street, 28<sup>th</sup> are located to the west within 1/8 of a mile from the subject property. The strip mall located to the east faces the project with its back and produces an inhospitable “barrier condition”. Much of the road system in the immediate area is not improved with curbs or sidewalks.

### **Access:**

Vehicular access is currently provided by curb cuts on both 30<sup>th</sup> and 127<sup>th</sup>. Pedestrian access is accomplished through paved shoulders on each frontage.

### **Environmentally Critical Areas:**

No ECA conditions are present.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The project includes 60-70 apartment units over a ground floor lobby and preschool meant to accommodate up to 80 children. Eight parking spaces associated with the preschool are proposed.

The design packet includes materials 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 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)

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Several members of the public were in attendance and offered the following comments:

- A designated smoking area is needed and should not be located on 30<sup>th</sup> Ave NE.
- Pre-school drop off and the dumpsters should also not be located on 30<sup>th</sup> Ave NE.
- Ample lighting and cameras should be provided.
- The applicant should move the playground to the roof and consider multiple playgrounds for different age groups.
- The residential units need parking; or LIHI should screen residents to make sure they do have a car.
- The box-like appearance of the massing should be reduced.
- The corner of the building should be eroded.
- The applicant should try to share access with the fire station.
- Streets need to be improved so residents can walk to community nodes.

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.

### **EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE June 13, 2016**

#### **1. Height, Bulk, and Scale:**

- a. The Board favored the **preferred** massing option as the playground classrooms will activate the street. The interior layout should be expressed in the massing. Recessed windows of differing sizes as shown on page 45 of the packet should be considered to add visual interest and reflect the differing unit layouts. (CS2-D & DC2-E)
- b. The design should consider integration of and reference to historic Lake City architectural cues such as strong horizontals building features and bold signage. (CS3-B & Lake City CS2-III)

#### **2. Street Edge:**

- a. The building needs a strong base and corner. The pre-school classroom uses will help activate the street edge and transparency should be maintained along the public right-of-way. (DC2-B)

- b. Explore another location for dumpsters to be hidden away so trash is not staged near the front entrance. At the next meeting, include information regarding how many days of pick-up will be required and how the impact of trash will be minimized. (DC1-C)
3. **Exterior Elements:** The Board favored the playful fence design shown in the concept landscape plan. They acknowledged the play area needs fencing but it should work with the design of the building. (DC4-A)
  4. **Pedestrian Connectivity:** This site's improvements will allow residents to make their way over to 28<sup>th</sup>, the festival street. The Board acknowledged public concern about pedestrians, particularly children, crossing in front of the fire station. (CS2-B)
  5. **Safety:** The Board acknowledged the public's concerns about safety along 30<sup>th</sup> Ave. The site design, particularly the 30<sup>th</sup> Street side, should be mindful of CPTED principles. (PL2-B & 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](#).

<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-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-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.

***North District - Lake City Supplemental Guidance:***

**CS2-III Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility**

**CS2-III-ii. Sensitive Edge Transitions:** Careful siting, building design and massing at upper levels should be used to achieve a positive transition at sensitive edges. Consider the following when a sensitive edge condition calls for design methods to provide a positive transition:

1. Varying color, texture and materials to break up the potential monolithic character of a large structure; perhaps create more of a townhouse look facing the lower-intensity residential neighborhood
2. Articulating the building façades vertically or horizontally in intervals that respond to the existing structures or platting pattern in the vicinity
3. Including pitched roofs, sloping roofs, dormers and/or gables of a size compatible with adjacent residential structures
4. Using exterior siding materials that are compatible with residential structures
5. Locating features such as open space on the zone edge to create further separation and buffering from the less intensive zone
6. Avoiding placing decks, patios and windows in direct view of neighboring residences to preserve privacy
7. Planting dense, evergreen trees (such as Western Red Cedar or Douglas Fir) and other vegetation to create a continuous greenbuffer between the structure and adjacent less-intensive residential-zoned properties
8. Providing upper-level setbacks to limit visibility of floors above the height of existing smaller-scaled development (single-family homes are typically 30 feet tall), adjusting accordingly for a specific site
9. Setting back the structure from the property line of less intensively zoned areas.

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

**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.

**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.

**DESIGN CONCEPT**

**DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.**

**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-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-E Form and Function**

**DC2-E-1. Legibility and Flexibility:** Strive for a balance between building use legibility and flexibility. Design buildings such that their primary functions and uses can be readily determined from the exterior, making the building easy to access and understand. At the same time, design flexibility into the building so that it may remain useful over time even as specific programmatic needs evolve.

**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.

## 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.

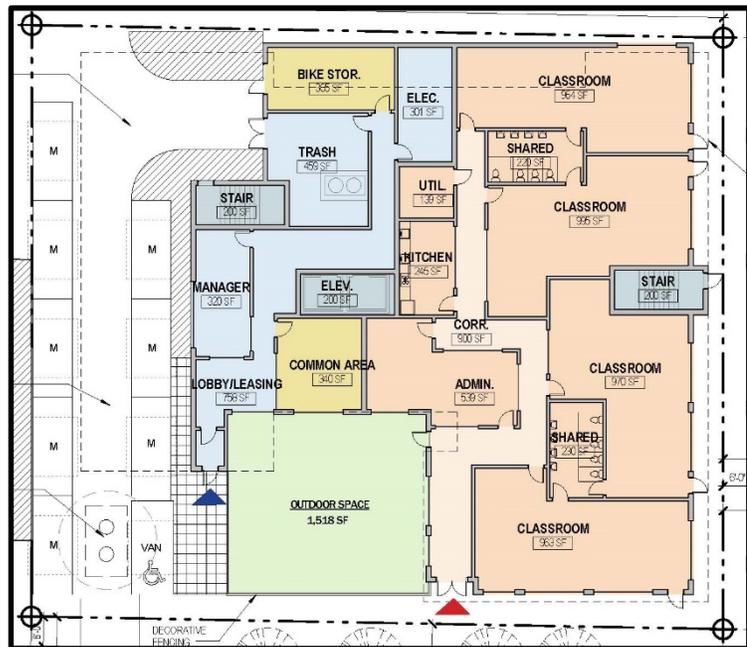
At the time of the Early Design Guidance the following departures were requested:

1. **Residential Uses at Street Level (SMC 23.47A.005.C.1.c):** The Code requires residential uses may occupy, in aggregate no more than 20% of the street level facing façade. The applicant proposes. The applicant proposes a common room and play area that constitutes 25% of the 127<sup>th</sup> Street façade.

The Board indicated they favored the departure as the proposed common room would be activated by allowing residents to watch over the play area. (CS3-A)

2. **Location of Parking (SMC 23.47A.032.B.1.a):** The Code requires no parking shall be located between a structure and a street lot line. The applicant proposes parallel parking for daycare uses to be located between the structure and the street.

The Board indicated they would be favorable as the site is not served by an alley and the possible interaction provided between the playground and the pedestrian realm would create enough activity to mitigate the impact of the parking. (CS2-C)



3. **Driveway Requirement (SMC 23.54.030.D.2):** The Code requires a minimum width of 22' for two-way travel. The applicant proposes a 10' wide driveway for eight cars.

The Board indicated they would be favorable as the number of cars served by the driveway is minimal and a wider curb cut would require reduced outdoor open space. Other advantages include less disruption to the sidewalk. Staff note, the applicant will need to design parallel parking so that no cars have to back-up directly into traffic. (DS3-B & PL2)

## **BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application.