



# City of Seattle

Department of Construction & Inspections  
Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN  
REVIEW

## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

---

Project Number: 3024574

Address: 3623 Fremont Avenue N

Applicant: Johnathan Lemons for Lemons Architecture PLLC.

Date of Meeting: Monday, July 25, 2016

Board Members Present: Emily McNichols  
Dale Kutzera

Board Members Absent: Marc Angelillo  
Christopher Bell  
Keith Walzak

SDCI Staff Present: Crystal Torres, Land Use Planner

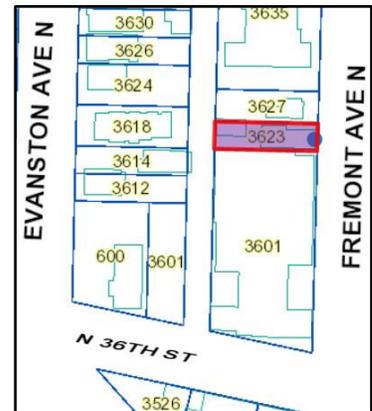
---

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Lowrise 3 (LR3)

Nearby Zones: (North) LR3  
(South) NC3P-40  
(East) LR2  
(West) LR3

Lot Area: 3,360 sq. ft.



**Current Development:**

The site currently consists of a single story building.

**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

The project site is located along Fremont Ave North between North 36<sup>th</sup> Street and North 38<sup>th</sup> Street in the Fremont neighborhood. Surrounding development includes a mix residential housing including 1-2 story homes within the neighborhood and 3-4 story multifamily apartment buildings along Fremont Ave North. The commercial core along North 36<sup>th</sup> Street includes a mix of restaurants, offices, salons, and retail stores. The neighborhood has several well-known landmarks including the Fremont Troll, Aurora Bridge, Statue of Lenin, the Fremont Rocket, Seattle Public Library, and the Fremont Abbey Arts Center. The architecture in the neighborhood is a mix of older wood frame structures, masonry buildings, and contemporary mixed-use buildings.

**Access:**

There is currently access to a single parking stall via the alley. Proposed pedestrian access is located along Fremont Ave N and vehicular access is proposed along the alley.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:**

There are no mapped environmentally critical areas located on site.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposal is for two, 5-story apartment buildings totaling 14 residential units. Surface parking to be provided for three vehicles. Existing structures to be demolished.

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 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**

The following comments were offered:

- Concerned with the impacts on parking and traffic in the area.
- Concerned with the proposed height and impacts to views, light, and air access.
- Concerned with the proposed building typology and neighborhood compatibility.
- Concerned with proposed roof top amenities and privacy impacts.
- Concerned with the proposed alley parking and impacts to noise and safety.
- Concerned with the proposed balconies and proximity to adjacent properties.
- Concerned with the previous automotive use and resulting environmental impacts.
- Questions related to the proposed height, grade changes and how height is measured.
- Questioned related to the location of bicycle racks.
- Concerned with noise impacts due to proposed circulation pathways.

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 Options/ Height, Bulk, Scale.** The Board discussed the presented options and unanimously supported the proposed two-building options providing the following guidance:
  - a. The Board echoed the public’s support for two building massing configurations as this would allow for more light and air within the site and in relationship to the neighboring buildings. **CS1-B; CS2-B-1; CS2-D**
  - b. The Board discussed the articulation and composition of the south façade, stating the north façade should reflect an equally thoughtful design.
  - c. The Board expressed concern related to the relationship of the proposed massing with adjacent building and requested the following information be included with the next submittal:
    - i. Include additional information related to the north and south adjacent building. **CS2-B-1; CS2-D**
    - ii. Provide height diagrams to illustrate impacts to light/air and relationship to adjacent buildings. **CS1-B**
    - iii. Provide privacy analysis including relationship of proposed balconies to adjacent structures and window study. **CS2-B; CS2-D**
    - iv. The Board discussed the quality of life for the residents of the proposed basements. The Board requested sections illustrating light/air access for basement units and relationship to walkways. **CS1-B; CS1-C**
  - d. Fremont Avenue.

- i. Provide elevations and perspectives from Fremont Ave and include adjacent building. **CS2-B-1; PL3-A; DC2-B; DC2-C**
- ii. The Board encouraged the exploration of subtle integration of the Fremont character into the project design, especially along the street frontage. **CS3-A; DC2-C-3**

**2. Amenity Area/Walkways.**

- a. The Board expressed concerns with the proposed amenity area and whether the proposal would meet the code requirements for amenity area. In addition, the Board encouraged further resolving the amenity and walkways to maximize space in between the buildings, as well as, maximizing amenity area. **DC3-B.**
- b. The Board requested more detail on how the roof top amenity will be designed to address privacy and noise. **CS2-D**
- c. The Board recommended orientation of the roof top amenity to the south as the space is limited; design to get the most sunlight. **DC3-B**
- d. The Board encouraged exploration of amenity area at the rear of the property. **DC3-B**
- e. Provide lighting plan and more information on the design will deter crime and gathering in the narrow corridors. **PL2-B**

**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. **Increase Maximum Façade Length (SMC 23.45.527.B.1):** The Code limits the maximum combined length of all portions of façades within 15 feet of a lot line that is neither a rear lot line nor a street or alley lot line to 65 percent of the length of that lot line, except as specified in subsection 23.45.527.B.2. This would result in a permitted length of 72'-8' and the applicant proposes 80'.

The Board indicated initial support for this departure, however, a greater gesture toward respecting adjacent sites is needed in order to fully support the departure. The Board encouraged exploration of moving the rear building further back and tucking parking under building, or placing amenity space above. **CS1-C**

- 2. **Reduce North Side Setback (SMC 23.45.518.A.):** The Code requires a side setback for facades 40 feet or less in length for apartments to be 5'. The applicant proposes 3'.

The Board was not supportive of this departure request, agreeing that the justification was not tied strongly enough to the design guidelines. The reduced 5' to 3' setback request would

warrant further analysis and a design which better meets the design guidelines.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### BOARD DIRECTION

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

### 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-A Energy Use

**CS1-A-1. Energy Choices:** At the earliest phase of project development, examine how energy choices may influence building form, siting, and orientation, and factor in the findings when making siting and design decisions.

### CS1-B Sunlight and Natural Ventilation

**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-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 and open spaces on the 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-1. Connection to the Street:** Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and public realm.

### 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-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.

**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-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-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-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.

**DESIGN CONCEPT**

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

**DC1-A Arrangement of Interior Uses**

**DC1-A-2. Gathering Places:** Maximize the use of any interior or exterior gathering spaces.

**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-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-3. Fit With Neighboring Buildings:** Use design elements to achieve a successful fit between a building and its neighbors.

**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.

**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.