



# City of Seattle

Department of Construction and Inspections  
Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN  
REVIEW

## RECOMMENDATION OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3024635

Address: 600 East Howell Street

Applicant: Hugh Schaeffer for S+H Works Architecture & Design

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, October 25, 2017

Board Members Present: Curtis Bigelow, Chair  
Barbara Busetti  
Andrew Haas

Board Members Absent: Kenny Pleasant  
Melissa Alexander

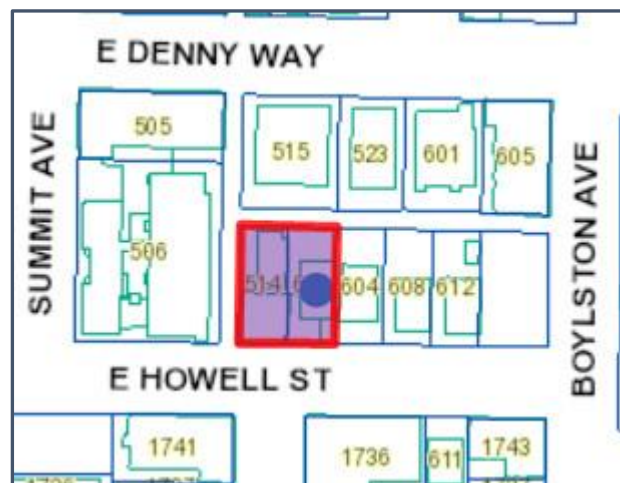
SDCI Staff Present: Holly J. Godard

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Midrise (MR)

Nearby Zones: (North) MR  
(South) MR  
(East) MR  
(West) MR

Lot Area: 7,676 square feet



### **Current Development:**

There are two single-story commercial structures located on the East Howell Street frontage of the site. Two multi-story duplex structures are located at the rear of the site. The lot slopes down approximately 16' from the northeast corner to the southwest corner. The site is sparsely landscaped.

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

The site is located in the Capitol Hill Urban Center Village. Surrounding development is primarily residential and includes a mix of midrise apartment buildings and turn-of-the-century single family homes, many of which have been converted to multifamily use. The neighborhood includes a variety of architectural styles ranging from turn-of-the-century brick apartments and Queen Anne Style single family residences to 1980's and 1990's multifamily development. On opposite corners across East Howell Street are two masonry apartment buildings, both built in the 1920's, which occupy over half of their respective sites and which were built to the property lines or with very small setbacks.

### **Access:**

Pedestrian access is from an adjacent sidewalk on East Howell Street. Improved alleys adjacent to the north and west property lines provide vehicular access to the site. There are no curb cuts along the East Howell Street frontage.

### **Environmentally Critical Areas:**

There are no mapped Environmentally Critical Areas (ECA) on the site.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The project proposal is to build a 7-story apartment building containing 77 units above commercial space. Existing structures to be demolished. No parking is proposed.

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)

## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE January 4, 2017

### PUBLIC COMMENT

The following public comments were offered at the meeting:

- Consider how the proposed building will be viewed from East Denny Way and articulate the rear facade.
- Building should be designed in consideration of future context of redevelopment of single family lots immediately adjacent to the east.
- Provide a large setback on East Howell Street to allow space for outdoor seating and gathering especially as viewed as an interesting and active terminus to Belmont Avenue.
- Project is adjacent to large apartment buildings; design should follow this precedent and not attempt to minimize the scale.
- Noise and activity associated with commercial use will be considerable so use soundproof windows in commercial space.
- Keep the design simple without too much articulation, massing blocks, color or over-reaching efforts to hide bulk.
- Carefully designed parapets are important to finish a building and to communicate building-to-sky relationship.
- Property parcels to the east will be developed. This project is in a position to set a good street wall precedent along East Howell Street.
- No parking is proposed so there it is difficult for visitors to access the neighborhood.
- The proposed setbacks are good.
- Use high quality and durable materials for a “luxurious” building.
- The developer should retain ownership after construction is complete.
- Install six-inch-deep windows.
- Security is important in this neighborhood and open space at grade should be secured without looking unfriendly.
- The commercial use at this site is important to retain.

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 and Context Response:** The Board discussed the three massing alternatives proposed and agreed massing Option #3 is the most appropriate response to the surrounding context, site topography and function as both a mid-block and corner site. The Board directed the applicant to proceed with Option #3. (CS1-C1, CS2-D5, DC2-A1)

- a. The Board appreciated the expression of the vertical circulation (stairs and elevator) to help define the building mass and the members encouraged the applicant to continue to explore this emphasis as the building form is developed. (DC2-B1)
  - b. The Board strongly supported the location and transparency of the commercial “box” at the southwest corner as a strong response to the corner and as an opportunity to engage the street. (CS2-B2, CS2-C1, PL3-C1)
  - c. The Board directed the applicant to simplify the east elevation massing choices at all building levels and to retain the simple forms as presented. (DC2-B1, DC2-E)
  - d. The Board supported eroding the southeast corner of the building and recommended further development of the structural column design. (CS2-D2)
  - e. The Board noted the public comment regarding visibility of the rear façade from East Denny Way and requested greater articulation of the rear façade. (DC2-B1)
- 2. Street Level Organization, Entries and Open Space:** The Board acknowledged the importance of the axial view of the building along Belmont Avenue and agreed the arrangement of uses and entries should respond to and highlight this view. (CS2-A1, CS2-A2, CS2-C1, DC1-A1)
- a. The Board directed the applicant to explore variations of the residential entry sequence and refine the outdoor circulation. (CS2-I.v., PL3-A1c)
  - b. The Board supported the location of service functions along the side alley. The Board recommended eliminating or significantly minimizing the presence of the leasing office on East Howell Street. (DC1-C4, PL2-II.iv)
  - c. The Board agreed security concerns at the site should be addressed through robust landscaping, incorporating gates to limit access to private areas, and providing adequate lighting. (PL2-B1, DC4-C1)
  - d. The Board encouraged activation of the street frontage and suggested outdoor seating at the commercial frontage as one possibility. (PL1-A2, PL3-C3)
- 3. Materiality and Secondary Façade Elements:** The Board discussed the significance of the surrounding architectural context and stressed the importance of architectural compatibility expressed through materials, massing, relationship to the street, etc. (CS3-A1, CS3-A2, DC2-C1, DC2-C3)
- a. The Board urged the applicant to develop a contemporary version of the richness and depth of the adjacent 20<sup>th</sup> century apartment buildings through modern materials and secondary architectural elements. (CS3-A1, CS3-A2, DC2-C1, DC2-C3)
  - b. The Board recommended a minimal palette of durable, high quality materials to express the uses within. (DC2-C3, DC4-A1, DC4-II)
  - c. The Board strongly supported a consistent window pattern and window scale which references the fenestration of the surrounding buildings. (DC2-C3)
  - d. The Board encouraged consideration of strategies to acknowledge the history of the neighborhood through design. (CS3-B2)

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following public comments were offered at the meeting:

- Planter boxes along the north south alley will probably get hit and start to break apart. Boxes should be fabricated of strong materials.

**PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS**

After visiting the site, reconsidering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following recommendations:

- 1. Massing and Context Response:** The applicant took Board guidance and developed Option #3.
  - a. The Board supported the vertical circulation as expressed on the southern façade, stairs and elevator, which helps define the building mass and breaks up the façade into two separate and related forms. (DC2-B1)
  - b. The Board recommended approval of the two-story transparency of the commercial “box” at the southwest corner. They discussed the “gasket” element above the commercial form which appears to lift the southwest residential building and determined it was a positive element of the design response, articulating uses and a sense of lightness. (CS2-B2, CS2-C1, PL3-C1)
  - c. The applicant addressed the east building massing and made secondary architectural additions to unify and simplify the facade. The Board approved the changes citing their earlier guidance. (DC2-B1, DC2-E)
  - d. The Board liked the southeast redesign without the formerly presented structural column and supported the redesigned entry sequence. (CS2-D2)
  - e. The Board noted the public comment regarding visibility of the rear façade from East Denny Way and requested greater articulation of the rear façade at the EDG meeting. The applicant made design changes to address Board direction and the Board supported the design. (DC2-B1)
- 2. Street Level Organization, Entries and Open Space:** The Board acknowledged the applicant’s design response to the important axial view of the building along Belmont Avenue. The Board agreed with the southern façade two-chunk massing to highlight the view, the location of the residential entry, and the small entry garden. (CS2-A1, CS2-A2, CS2-C1, DC1-A1)
  - a. The applicant reorganized the entry to a more direct and visible entry from the street in response to Board guidance. The Board approved of the changes and appreciated removal of the column at the entry. (CS2-I.v., PL3-A1c)
  - b. The Board supported the location of service functions along the side alley as earlier approved and, in response to public comment, directed the applicant to check that

- space next to the trash and move in area is wide enough for functionality. The leasing office is off of the street and located within the building. (DC1-C4, PL2-II.iv)
- c. The Board agreed security concerns at the site should be addressed through robust landscaping, incorporating gates to limit access to private areas, and providing adequate lighting and recommended the proposal's response to guidance. (PL2-B1, DC4-C1)
  - d. Street and corner activation has been addressed by the applicant with a two-story commercial space with high transparency, split faced concrete block to signal the commercial space, and opportunities for creative uses by future tenants. The design intent to make a lively and welcoming space will be partially achieved by the future tenant, but the current proposal will allow for views into the space, provide a lit space in the evening, and serve as a neighborhood commercial "third space". The Board supported the proposed street level organization. (PL1-A2, PL3-C3)

- 3. Materiality and Secondary Façade Elements:** The applicant addressed the importance of architectural compatibility expressed through materials, massing, relationship to the street, and by providing materials specific to intended uses. (CS3-A1, CS3-A2, DC2-C1, DC2-C3)
- a. The Board recommended the materials and secondary architectural elements which help provide a solid commercial building typology and secondary architectural elements which complete the design concepts. (CS3-A1, CS3-A2, DC2-C1, DC2-C3)
  - b. The Board recommended the palette of durable, high quality materials and recommended that the applicant research cementitious panels and use a very high-quality product. (DC2-C3, DC4-A1, DC4-II)
  - c. The Board recommended the fenestration choices and appreciated the high degree of glazing. (DC2-C3)

### 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 recommended approval of the following departure requests:

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

1. **West Side Setback (SMC 23.45.518B):** The Code requires a 7' average setback and a 5' minimum setback for portions of a structure less than 42' above grade.

The applicant proposes a 8.53' average setback and a 2.75' minimum setback for the portion of the structure less than 42' above grade.

The Board recommends approval for this departure as the design reestablishes the commercial corner at the alley edge and emphasizes the axial relationship to Belmont

Avenue view. In addition, the setback emphasizes the modular expression of the massing. (CS2-B2, CS2-C1, DC2-B1)

2. **Front Setback (SMC 23.45.518B):** The Code requires a 7' average setback and a 5' minimum setback from the street lot line.

The applicant proposes 5.39' average setback and a 9" minimum setback.

The Board recommends approval of this departure request as the design reestablishes the presence of a strong commercial form at the street, enforces the axial response of the design to the Belmont Avenue view, and is consistent with surrounding development patterns. The departure request represents the maximum departure on the front southwest facades. (CS2-II.ii, CS2-C1, DC2-B2)

3. **Rear Setback (SMC 23.45.518B):** The Code requires a 10' minimum rear setback when adjacent to an alley.

The applicant proposes a 4.0' minimum setback.

The Board recommended approval of this departure request, as the decreased rear setback allows the building to shift towards the alley and provide additional space on the front elevation to articulate a quality entry sequence and commercial presence. (CS2-B2, CS2-D5)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendation summarized above was based on the design review packet dated October 25, 2017 and the materials shown and described by the applicant at the Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, the three Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design and departures with no conditions.

The Board strongly recommended that the applicant upgrade the cementitious panels to the highest grade of panel possible and make any material changes in the MUP and building permit plan sets.

## 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](#).

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| <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-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-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-5. Respect for Adjacent Sites:** Respect adjacent properties with design and site planning to minimize disrupting the privacy of residents in adjacent buildings.

**Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:**

**CS2-I Streetscape Compatibility**

**CS2-I-v. Multiple Frontages:** For buildings that span a block and “front” on two streets, each street frontage should receive individual and detailed site planning and architectural design treatments.

**CS2-II Corner Lots**

**CS2-II-i. Residential Entries:** Incorporate residential entries and special landscaping into corner lots by setting the structure back from the property lines.

**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-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.

***Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:***

**PL2-II Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances**

**PL2-II-iv. Residential Entrances:** Minimize the number of residential entrances on commercial streets where non-residential uses are required. Where unavoidable, minimize their impact to the vitality of the retail commercial streetscape.

**DESIGN CONCEPT**

**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-2. Dual Purpose Elements:** Consider architectural features that can be dual purpose— adding depth, texture, and scale as well as serving other project functions.

**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-C Design**

**DC3-C-2. Amenities/Features:** Create attractive outdoor spaces suited to the uses envisioned for the project.

**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.

***Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:***

**DC4-I Height, Bulk, and Scale**

**DC4-I-i. Materials:** Masonry and terra cotta are preferred building materials, although other materials may be used in ways that are compatible with these more traditional materials. The Broadway Market is an example of a development that blends well with its surroundings and includes a mixture of materials, including masonry.

**DC4-II Exterior Finish Materials**

**DC4-II-i. 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.