

RECOMMENDATION OF THE SOUTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3025891

Address: 7118 Beacon Ave. S.

Applicant: Julian Weber, JWA Architects

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, March 13, 2018

Board Members Present: Charles Romero (Chair)

Carey Dagliano-Holmes

Sharon Khosla David Sauvion

Board Members Absent: Julian Weber (Recused)

SDCI Staff Present: David L. Landry, AICP, Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial 1

(NC1-30)

Nearby Zones: North SF 5000 and NC1-30

South SF 5000 East SF 5000 West SF 5000

Project Area: 41,986 square feet (sq. ft.)

Environmentally Critical Areas: None



Current Development:

The proposal site is located on the east side of Beacon Avenue S., just south of S. Myrtle St. The site is currently occupied by a single story mini strip mall built in 1957, which currently includes a grocery store and other commercial uses.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The proposal site is located within the Rainier Valley neighborhood district. The Rainier Valley neighborhood district is located east of Beacon Hill; west of Mount Baker, and Seward Park, south of the Central District and First Hill, and north of Rainier Beach. The proposal site is sandwiched between institutional uses; Van Asselt Elementary School to the west, Seattle Police Department South Precinct to the east and Van Asselt Playground and Community Center to north of the Police station. Other uses in the immediate area include an auto service shop located at the corner of Beacon Ave S. and S. Myrtle and the East African Community Services located to the east of the Community Center and Playground. Other land uses located to the northwest, south west and southeast have a strong residential character with tree line street made up of one and two-story single family residences.

Access:

Access to the site is currently from the east off of Beacon Avenue to the grocery store and other outlets south of Myrtle though the auto service parking site at the corner of Beacon and S. Myrtle, along a driveway/alley along the rear or east side of the strip mall building.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is to construct 30 townhouse units and 10 live-work units on the east side of Beacon Ave. S., just south of S. Myrtle St. Parking for 40 vehicles will be provided on-site at grade.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE February 28, 2017

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3025891) at the following 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

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments at the EDG public meeting and two written comments were received one on the day of the public meeting and one after.

One purpose of the design review process is for the Board and City to receive comments from the public that help to identify feedback and concerns about the site and design concept, identify applicable citywide and neighborhood design guidelines of highest priority to the site and explore conceptual design, siting alternatives and eventual architectural design. Concerns with off-street parking, traffic and construction impacts are reviewed as part of the environmental review conducted by SDCI and are not part of this review. Concerns with building height calculations and bicycle storage standards are addressed under the City's zoning code and are not part of this review.

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:

- a. The Board was supportive of the general design concept of creating a well-designed dense residential townhouse project with shared open spaces. The Board commended the design team's goal of providing three bedroom family oriented units, as very few projects have provided this option in the past. The Board was also supportive of the team's goal of providing live-work units along Beacon Avenue but were concerned about the viability of live-work units along Beacon Ave. (CS3-A-4)
- **b.** Board members felt that Option 1 had the strongest sense of commercial design with its two-story mass and awning used for the façade of the live —work spaces which reference some of the massing and scale of other commercial uses located to the north. **(PL3-A, PL3-C)**
- c. The Board noted that part of being an urban site is the ability to have differences in character and different massing. For this reason, overall, the Board felt that the three options presented at the EDG were not successful in meeting the aforementioned goals as they did not reflect the diverse cultural nature of Beacon Hill neighborhood, they were too similar in terms of overall design concept, the layout is too dense and there is not enough open and amenity spaced designed to foster as sense of community engagement. As such, the Board asked the design team to develop a program with more of the following attributes: (PL1-B-2, DC2-B-1, DC2-C-1)

- Introduce design elements and programming that will aid in creating a stronger sense of cultural and community identity. (CS3-B, DC2-C-1) Reduce the building mass in order to make room for additional amenity space. (CS1-B-2, CS3-A-4, CS3-B)
- 2) Redesign the corner southern corner of the site where the townhouses are located to accommodate commercial uses on the bottom floors with amenity uses on the upper floors. (DC2-C-2, DC2-E-1)
- **3)** Provide more of a distinct architectural expression between commercial and residential. **(CS3-B, DC2-B-B1)**
- 2. Access to Light and Air: The Board described the three options presented at EDG as being too dark and narrow and were concerned that the site's open spaces would not have access to light and air due to the very dense nature of the project. The Board felt that there was not enough of a balance between built structures and open space and more opportunities for the creation of more amenity and open spaces are needed. Board members also noted that the shadow studies depicted on pages 40 -42, in the EDG packet dated February 28, 2017 further demonstrated that the project including the pathways would be in shade or shadow most of the year. Finally because of the orientation and repetitive layout and design of the majority of the buildings, many homes would be in shade and not be able to take advantage of any solar gains. The Board recommended the following (CS1-B-1, CS1-B-2):
 - a. Break up the repetitive building forms with greater variety. (CS3-A-4, DC2-B-1, DC2-C-1)
 - b. Combine some units to create larger amenity spaces. (PL1-A-1, PL1-A-2, PL1-B-3, DC2-E-1)
 - c. Change the orientation of buildings to create better transitioning. (PL3-B, DC2-E-1)
 - **d.** Explore creating a larger center corridor that could be used for more outdoor or amenity spaces. **(PL1-B-1, DC3-B-4)**
- **3. Sense of Identity and Community**: The Board felt strongly that there was a lack of project identity or a recognizable entry off of Beacon Avenue and wanted to see more than just two driveways marking the entryway into the project site.
 - a. Board members were concerned that the project in its current design does not reflect the racially diverse nature of the Beacon Hill neighborhood and suggested that there need to be strong reference to that cultural diversity in the architectural character of the buildings. (PL3-A-1, PL1-B-3, CS3-B, DC2-C-3)
 - b. Board members also suggested that the street oriented units needed to be more than just identical building facades repeated along the Beacon Avenue street frontage. Members suggested that the repetitive pattern could be broken up with the introduction of townhouse forms or outdoor spaces at the edges of the development which could aid in creating a more unique recognizable transition into and within the project site. (CS3-A, CS3-B-1, PL3-A, PL3-B, PL3-C)
 - The Board felt strongly that the townhouse structure located on the south side of the development is an opportunity for creating a project identity or community amenity. (PL3-A-1, PL1-B-3)

- **d.** Board members were concerned that the current program requires more open space to adequately support the project's stated goal of creating family oriented housing and a sense of community. **(PL1-A-1, PL1-A-2, PL1-B-2, DC3-B-4)**
- Create more architectural variety and a stronger sense of identity. (CS3-A-4, DC2-B-1, DC2-C-1, DC2-E-1)
- Beacon Ave., and the strong possibility that the live-work units along the street might not be viable. Board members asked the design team for precedents of successful live-work units that might inform the design of the live-work units being proposed. The Board felt that if the goal is to provide commercial use along Beacon Ave, then the current design approach does not work. Some Board members also felt that the live-work units would actually take away commercial activity along Beacon Ave., which normally thrives as a result of vibrant commercial activity along this main thoroughfare. Finally the Board questioned how the façades of live-work units were developed as they do not match the north-south orientation of the other living units nor the diagonal angle of Beacon Ave. Therefore, the Board agreed that the diagonal facades really did not worked and gave the following direction or suggestions (PL3-B, DC2-E-1):
 - a. Introduce building design elements that would create a stronger sense of commercial use along Beacon Ave. (CS3-A-4, PL3-C, DC2-E-1)
 - b. Possibly combine or rotate live-work units. (CS3-A-4, PL3-C, DC2-B-1)
 - 5. Site Layout: The Board felt that designing units to their maximum depth of 30 feet along Beacon Ave. has resulted in a 'monotonous landscape' with very little character or opportunity for home owners to establish any individual identity of their own. The Board also felt that there was not a sufficient balance between open space and built environment due to a lack of open space denseness of building units. Board members verbalized that by introducing as many units as possible on the site it will actually take away from a sense of community engagement. Board members were concerned that the placement of many of the bedrooms, configured in a face-to-face orientation, with units placed only 15 feet apart would lack privacy and suggests that window blinds would stay closed which is not conducive to community engagement. The Board felt that the project was forcing people into close quarters without proper amenity spaces. The Board gave the following direction (CS1, CS3-A-2, CS3-A-3, CS3-A-4, PL1-A-1, PL1-A-2, PL1-B-1, PL1-B-2, PL1-B-3):
 - **a.** Introduce elements that promote cultural diversity which is indicative of the identity of Beacon Hill. (**DC3-B-4, PL2-C-2**)
 - Introduce elements that will foster a stronger sense of community. (PL1-B-2, PL2-C-2)
 - c. Create better transitioning to the adjacent neighborhoods. (PL3-B, DC2-C-3)
 - **6. Vehicular Access**: The Board was concerned that such a large amount of open space was dedicated to automobile use. Members envisioned automobiles backing into each other in an area dedicated to community activity and engagement which is potentially dangerous. Members stated that they felt that the amenity areas were primarily designed for

circulation with benches located at the each corners for community use only. The Board felt that Option 2 had the central access which allowed for larger spaces however the Board directed the Design team to (PL2-C-1, DC1-B-1):

- a. Create more viable open space for users and residence. PL1-B-2, DC3-B-4)
- b. Create a stronger sense of identity at the primary entryway. (CS3-A-4, DC2-E-1)
- c. Create a centralized amenity area instead of at the corners of the development.(PL1-A-1, PL1-B-3, PL1-B-3)
- **7. Roof Forms**: The Board felt that while the gabled roofs were a positive design feature, they lacked variety and a strong sense of identity. Members also thought maximizing building heights made the development feel oppressive and wanted to see better arrangements and greater variety. **(CS3-A-4, DC2-C-1)**

SECOND EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE June 13, 2017

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http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design Review Program/Project Reviews/Reports/default.asp.

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PUBLIC COMMENT

At the second EDG meeting, members of the public were present and several speakers provided comments and raised the following issues:

- Suggested that the project location is kind of a neighborhood gateway with a very residential feel and that the developer should do what they can to make the project look residential and less commercial.
- Indicated a preference for Scheme Four because of how the live-work unit are angled to the street.
- Agreed with the use introduction of the outdoor amenity spaces in between the units.
- Stated that they were not a fan of hardie board panels and would prefer to see the use of brick, horizontal siding, and windows that are not commercial looking.

• Agreed with the use of gabled roofs on the townhouses and the open spaces to the center of the development.

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. Early Design Guidance: The Board generally felt that the applicant responded well to the guidance given at the first EDG meeting and feedback given by neighborhood community groups. The Board liked the development of a fourth massing option which features greater outdoor amenities along with bringing more light and air into the development. The Board also like the use of the differing roof forms used for the live-work and the residential units. Members also felt that the project did a better job using different landscape schemes to define access points and areas between the residential and live-work units. The Board did suggest however that there are further opportunities for making the residential units feel more 'homey' through the use of materials. (CS3-A, PL3-B, DC3-A)
- 2. Live-Work Units: The Supported the commercial reading of the live-work units with the use of glazing, canopies, and unit orientation. The Board also supported the orientation of the live-work units toward Beacon Ave. The Board also agreed with the scale of the live-work units and how they could provide better access to smaller business entities.
 - a. The Board was interested in seeing subtle adjustments in the use of materials along Beacon Avenue that would help shape the visual language of the live-work units designed to better fit the units into the existing neighborhood context. (PL13-B, PL3-C)
 - b. The Board wanted to see additional architectural detail would create a stronger sense of neighborhood commercial use along Beacon Ave. (PL3-C)
 - c. The Board wanted to see a stronger architectural distinction between the livework and residential units. (PL3-A, PL3-C)
 - d. The Board wanted to see details related to venting, where it happens and how it relates to the building façade. **(PL3-C)**
 - e. The Board was interested in seeing how the signage for the live-work units might function and what it might look like. **(PL3-C)**
- **3. Sense of Identity**: The Board asked how the revised design has incorporated the diverse nature of the neighborhood per earlier EDG 1 guidance.
 - a. The Board directed the applicant to incorporate materials that reflect the character of the existing neighborhood. **(CS3-A, PL3-B)**

4. Amenity Space: The Board indicated that they would support the reduction in the number of units and more open space opportunity and engagement to the community at the projects southeast corner. **(PL1-A, PL1-C, PL3-B, DC3-A)**

RECOMMENDATION March 13, 2018

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PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments at the Recommendation public meeting. Two written comments were received one on the day of the public meeting. These areas of public comment related to a request to be made a party of record.

One purpose of the design review process is for the Board and City to receive comments from the public that help to identify feedback and concerns about the site and design concept, identify applicable citywide and neighborhood design guidelines of highest priority to the site and explore conceptual design, siting alternatives and eventual architectural design. Concerns with off-street parking, traffic and construction impacts are reviewed as part of the environmental review conducted by SDCI and are not part of this review. Concerns with building height calculations and bicycle storage standards are addressed under the City's zoning code and are not part of this review.

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. Early Design Guidance Response: The Board noted that the applicant responded well to the guidance given at the second EDG meeting and feedback given by neighborhood community groups. The Board approved of the increased outdoor amenities spaces and landscaping, the varied roof forms used for the live-work and residential units, the use of materials that reflect the local neighborhood character and the increased widths between living units. (CS3-A, PL3-B, DC3-A)
- 2. Live-Work Units: The Board recommended that the design changes resolved the guidance from the second EDG meeting, including: use of different materials along Beacon Avenue to create a stronger architectural distinction between the live-work and residential units; the depiction of a signage for the live-work units; and the placement of venting related to the building façade. (PL3-C)
- **3. Sense of Identity**: The Board discussed how the revised design has incorporated the diverse nature of the neighborhood per earlier EDG 1 guidance. With inclusion of the varied use of materials and colors, the Board was satisfied that their guidance from the second EDG meeting had been met. **(CS3-A, PL3-B)**
- 4. Amenity Space: At the second EDG public meeting, the Board indicated that they would support the reduction in the number of units to offset an increase in more internal communal open space opportunities and more engagement with the street. As result of the units located at Southeast corner being drastically reconfigured to create more open space opportunities and engagement to the community, the Board recommended that the guidance had been fully met. (PL1-A, PL1-C, PL3-B, DC3-A)
- **5. Materiality:** The Board discussed at length the strategies behind the application of material finishes on the project. The Board supported the use of wood on the Beacon Hill frontages and the red accents for the commercial uses facing the street.

Some Board members were concerned with the use of so many material changes and colors and verbalized that the form of the building structure should determine the placement of materials. Some Board members noted that the units are already differentiated because of their placement and differences in grade and therefore the added layers of colors and materials is not necessary. Other Board members suggested that the greater variety of materials is what both the Board and the members of the public requested and that it would aid in way-finding.

The Board did not gain consensus as to whether changes should be made, and therefore did not recommend any conditions related to the materials and colors. (CS2-2, PL3-B.2, DC4-A)

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority guidelines identified by the Board as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. For the full text please visit the <u>Design Review website</u>.

CONTEXT & SITE

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.
- **CS3-A-3. Established Neighborhoods**: In existing neighborhoods with a well-defined architectural character, site and design new structures to complement or be compatible with the architectural style and siting patterns of neighborhood buildings.
- **CS3-A-4. Evolving Neighborhoods:** 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

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

PL1-A. NETWORK OF OPEN SPACES

- **PL1-A-1. Enhancing Open Space:** Design the building and open spaces to positively contribute to a broader network of open spaces throughout the neighborhood. Consider ways that design can enhance the features and activities of existing off-site open spaces. Open space may include sidewalks, streets and alleys, circulation routes and other open areas of all kinds
- **PL1-A-2.** Adding to Public Life: Seek opportunities to foster human interaction through an increase in the size and/or quality of project-related open space available for public life. Consider features such as widened sidewalks, recessed entries, curb bulbs, courtyards, plazas, or through-block connections, along with place-making elements such as trees, landscape, art, or other amenities, in addition to the pedestrian amenities listed in PL1.B3.

PL1-C. OUTDOOR USES AND ACTIVITIES

PL2-C-1. Selecting Activity Areas: Concentrate activity areas in places with sunny exposure, views across spaces, and in direct line with pedestrian routes.

- **PL2-C-2. Informal Community Uses:** In addition to places for walking and sitting, consider including space for informal community use such as performances, farmer's markets, kiosks and community bulletin boards, cafes, or street vending.
- **PL2-C-3. Year-Round Activity:** Where possible, include features in open spaces for activities beyond daylight hours and throughout the seasons of the year, especially in neighborhood centers where active open space will contribute vibrancy, economic health, and public safety. These may include:
- seasonal plantings or displays and/or water features;
- b. outdoor heaters;
- c. overhead weather protection;
- d. ample, moveable seating and tables and opportunities for outdoor dining;
- e. an extra level of pedestrian lighting;
- f. trees for moderate weather protection and shade; and/or
- g. 24-hour wi-fi service.

PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.

PL3-B RESIDENTIAL EDGES

- **PL3-B-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-B-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.

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.

DESIGN CONCEPT

DC3 Open Space Concept: Integrate open space design with the design of the building so that each complements the other.

DC3-A. BUILDING-OPEN SPACE RELATIONSHIP

DC3-A-1. Interior/Exterior Fit: Develop an open space concept in conjunction with the architectural concept to ensure that interior and exterior spaces relate well to each other and support the functions of the development.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation on the requested departures was 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 departures. At the time of the Recommendation meeting the applicant requested the following departures:

1. Required Parking - Townhouse units (SMC 23.54.015 B1.d.) The Code requires that for an individual garage serving a townhouse unit, the minimum required size of a parking space shall be for a large car, as described in subsection 23.54.030.A; (which is 8.5 ft. x 19 ft).

The applicant is requesting a departure from this requirement to allow medium sized parking stalls in place of large parking stalls. The applicant states that the departure would allow for a wider central pedestrian pathway which would increase from 16' to 18'. This would be achieved by decreasing the north and south driveway aisle widths by 2'.

Board members unanimously supported the departure as it would aid in increasing opportunities to create three-bedroom units, while the enhancing the project's open space amenities and creating greater pedestrians opportunities. (PL1-A-1 Enhancing Open Space, PL1-A-2 Adding to Public Life, PL2-C-3 People-Friendly Spaces)

The four Board members voted unanimously in support of approving the departure as currently shown.

2. Setbacks for Structures with Residential Uses When Abutting a Residentially-Zoned Lot - (SMC 23.47A.008.D.2): The Code requires that the floor of a dwelling unit located along the street level street facing facade shall be at least 4' above or 4' below sidewalk grade or be set back at least 10' from the sidewalk.

The applicant is requesting this departure to allow the street level floor of unit TH 34 to be located 1'-6" above sidewalk grade. The rationale is that the townhouse units of building 12, located at the southeast corner of the site face directly at the public/community amenity area. The reduced height of the townhome entries would allow for the decks and entrances to the units to be more in line with the public space which will help create more of welcoming, residential social gathering space. The lower height would also eliminate the requirement for railings on the deck, which would further aid in creating more of a social gathering space.

The Board recommended approval of the departure as the units at the Southeast corner were drastically reconfigured to create more open space opportunities and engagement to

the community and street. (PL3-B Residential Edges, DC3-A-1 Interior/Exterior Fit, PL2-C-1 Weather Protection-Locations and Coverage)

The four Board members voted unanimously in support of approving the departure as currently shown.

3. Setbacks for Structures with Residential Uses When Abutting a Residentially-Zoned Lot - (SMC 23.47A.014): The Code requires that a 15' setback above 13' is required for structures in commercial zones, with residential use, abutting residential zones.

The applicant is requesting this departure to allow the townhouses along the eastern property line to be reduced to maintain a 5'-8" minimum setback. The rationale is that the property located to the east of the proposal site is owned and occupied by a Seattle Police Department which has a building separation or setback distance of approximately 90'. The requested reduced setback allows the site to better accommodate two, three unit, residential buildings along the south side of the central walkway rather than on, six unit building. The separation between the two buildings allows for a physical connection from the south entry to the shared amenity area.

The Board appreciated the inclusion of an added connection from the south entry to the shared amenity area. The Board also appreciated the how the units at the south entry were reconfigured to accommodate a larger communal space at the street allowing users to access the shared amenity via the added connection or throughway. (PL1-A-1 Enhancing Open Space, PL3-B Safety and Security, DC3-A Building-Open Space Relationship)

The four Board members voted unanimously in support of approving the departure as currently shown.

BOARD DIRECTION

The recommendations summarized below were based on the design review packet dated March 13, 2018 and materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the March 13, 2018 Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, all four Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design and departures, without conditions.