



# City of Seattle

Department of Construction & Inspections  
Nathan Torgelson, Director

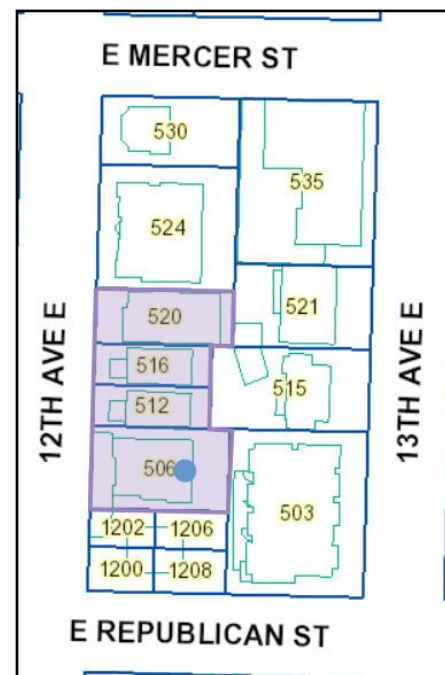
DESIGN  
REVIEW

## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3026514  
Address: 506-520 12<sup>th</sup> Ave. E.  
Applicant: Hugh Schaffer  
Date of Meeting: Wednesday, April 26, 2017  
Board Members Present: Curtis Bigelow (Chair)  
Melissa Alexander  
Barbara Busetti  
Andrew Haas  
Kenny Pleasant  
Sarah Saviskas  
Board Members Absent: None  
SDCI Staff Present: Sean Conrad

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Lowrise 3 (LR3)  
Nearby Zones: (North) LR3  
(South) LR3  
(East) LR3  
(West) LR3  
Project site area: 15,112 square feet



**Current Development:**

The site comprises four lots developed with a mix of single-family and multi-family residences.

**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

Surrounding development includes a mix of residential housing types, from detached single-family houses to apartment and condominium buildings. The project site is in the Capitol Hill neighborhood. The neighborhood offers a variety of restaurants, shopping, living, and working hubs that make it an attractive destination for residents.

The proposed project is located in the central portion of the Capitol Hill Urban Center Village. The site, situated between the Broadway and 15th Ave commercial strips and just north of the Pike/Pine corridor, is served by the new Capitol Hill Transit Center, buses to Downtown Seattle, and Interstate 5.

**Access:**

Vehicular and pedestrian access is provided by 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue East.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:**

The site contains the steep slope critical area.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposal is for four, three-story townhouse buildings with a total of 19 units. Parking for 19 vehicles will be located within the structures. Existing multi-family 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)

**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE April 26, 2017****PUBLIC COMMENT**

Prior to the Early Design Guidance meeting the Department received three comment letters.

- One person prefers Scheme B, stating that it breaks up the monotony of the 10-11 facades along 12<sup>th</sup> Ave. E.

- Provide only one driveway entrance into the site
- Design the buildings to fit the neighborhood character
- Include private spaces for the residents
- Include green roofs for the residents overlooking the project site
- Expand the buffer strip along the sidewalk
- Impacts the proposed positioning, massing, and front setback of the project has to:
  - Sunlight, indirect sunlight and other ambient light to the building to the north
  - The prevailing setbacks of buildings along 12<sup>th</sup> Ave. E.
- The proposed alignment of the north/south driveway and lack of useful light it will admit
- Negative impacts of departure to allow 6' overhangs
- All Schemes appear to violate the 7' average setback requirement along 12<sup>th</sup> Ave. E.
- The negative impacts of the departure from setback requirements for the building above 34' in height
- Lack of planting strip and street trees in the proposal to buffer pedestrians from traffic along 12<sup>th</sup> Ave. E.
- Project not sensitive to possible traffic increase on 12<sup>th</sup> Ave. E.
- Apparent destruction of rockery straddling north property line
- Potential increase in storm water runoff, soil erosion and lack of mitigation for both
- Failure of current design to centralize trash

At the Early Design Guidance meeting the following public comments were offered:

- Property owners on the north side of the project site are not opposed to the project, rather they welcome the new development and would like to see Scheme C be approved for development.
- The proposed townhouse development is not in keeping with the building setbacks of the adjacent buildings to the north and south. This has the potential to impact ambient light for those buildings and creates a disjointed streetscape.
- How will proposed landscaping integrate into existing landscaping for the property to the north.
- Would like to see a shared garbage collection system instead of individual trash/recycling containers on the street.

One purpose of the design review process is for the Board and City to receive comments from the public that help to identify 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 building setbacks, traffic, and storm water impacts are reviewed as part of the environmental review conducted by SDCI 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 for the applicants:

### **1. Height/Bulk/Scale**

- a. The majority of the Board favored the proposed massing of Scheme C, the applicant's preferred option, to move forward to a recommendation meeting with changes as recommended by the Board. (CS2-D)

### **2. Materials**

- a. The Board supported the applicant's conceptual material palette that included white brick along the street facing units with black window trim. The Board noted that the recommendation packet materials should be similar to the concept materials shown on page 34 of the EDG packet. The Board also requested the applicant detail the materials proposed for the bay windows along the street facing facades. (DC4-II, CS3-A)

### **3. Streetscape**

- a. Several of the Board members liked the proposed stoops along 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue East and the entry sequence it provides to each unit. In addition, Board members felt the conceptual landscape plan, that included a tree in front of each of the units facing the street, was appropriate. (PL1-B, CS2-I)
- b. The Board had concerns with the stairwell on the west side (street facing front) of the units along 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue East and how this will engage the street. Several Board members commented that the idea of "eyes on the street" does not tend to happen when a stairway is located on the street facing façade of the units. Other Board members requested more information during the recommendation phase on how the proposed windows would interact with the street facing stairwell, commenting that some livable space should be incorporated in the stairwell to assist in engaging the street facing façade. (PL3-A, PL2-B, DC1-A)

### **4. Pedestrian Access**

- a. The Board felt strongly that it was important the pedestrian path from the sidewalk along 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue East be separated and not shared with the vehicle driveway off the street. (DC1-B)
- b. The Board had concerns with the front door access to the rear units, noting that the vehicle parking required residents or their guests to access the front door from the east side of the units where the doors would face a relatively high retaining wall, creating an outdoor space that is not very friendly or useable. The Board would like to see this entrance addressed and how the retaining wall can be softened through the use of materials, landscaping or both. (DC2-D)

## **5. Trash/Recycling**

- a. The Board reiterated the public comment regarding individual trash and recycling collection. The Board agreed with the developer that trash and recycling for all units should be consolidated and taken care of by the homeowner's association. The Board requested additional information as part of the recommendation phase regarding the trash/recycling collection strategy, location, and proposed screening of the trash area. (DC1-II)

## **6. Interior Courtyard**

- a. The Board had concerns that the interior courtyard, being a major component of the development site, sits in a canyon, leading to dark spaces and potentially limited areas where landscaping could thrive. See departure discussion 2 (Driveway Overhang Separation in LR3 Zone) on page 6 of this report. (DC3-A)

## **7. Site Topography**

- a. The Board noted that preferred Scheme C includes a number of high retaining walls on its north, south and east sides. The Board felt that additional information was needed on the retaining walls as part of the recommendation phase. The Board recommended the application include material call outs for the retaining walls and detailed landscaping to help soften the visual impact high retaining walls can have and, in turn, create a livable interior courtyard space. Please include cross-sections of the walls proposed on the north and south sides of the interior courtyard demonstrating how the wall heights will be broken up. (DC2-B)

The Board requested the recommendation phase include renderings of how the retaining walls would look from the interior courtyard of the project, for both the north and south retaining walls. (DC3-B)

The Board acknowledged public comments and requested the applicant coordinate the design and future construction of the retaining walls with the neighboring property owner to the south. (DC3-II)

## **8. Security Gates**

- a. The Board stated that the project would be better without incorporating a security gate at its driveway entrance into the interior courtyard. (PL3-A)

## **9. Rooftop Amenity Space**

- a. The Board agreed with public comments about the importance of the rooftops for all of the units since the site will be lower than the adjacent development to the east. The rooftops should include as many green factors as possible. (DC2-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 for Scheme C:

- 1. Front Upper Level Setback in LR3 Zone (SMC 23.45.518.L):** The Code requires an upper-level setback of 12 feet above a height of 34 feet for structures with a 30 foot height limit according to Table A for 23.45.514.

Under preferred Scheme C, the applicant is proposing the dwelling unit's upper level setback above 34 feet along the street lot line be setback 10' 8" instead of the required 12' setback. The presentation packet notes, eliminating the front upper level setback creates a consistent architectural form along the street. The project is already set back for power line clearances, additional setbacks will erode the street wall, is not in keeping with the existing fabric, and is not a good precedent for the neighborhood. Additionally, the project already includes articulation along the frontage that is reducing the perceived height of the structures.

The Board was split on whether to consider the requested departure. Board members in favor of the departure request felt that the massing of Scheme C works better with the departure in place. Board members who were not inclined to support the departure noted that the building and its street facing façade is already further forward (closer to the street) than the two adjacent buildings and the required setback is appropriate given the buildings size and relationship to the street. (DC2-C, CS3-A) Staff recommends the applicant provide two alternatives, one meeting the code requirement, the other representing the departure request, for the Board's consideration.

- 2. Driveway Overhang Separation in LR3 Zone (SMC 23.45.518.F.2):** The Code requires principal structures, separated by a driveway or parking aisle, any projections that enclose floor area may extend a maximum of 3 feet into the required separation if they are at least 8 feet above finished grade.

Under preferred Scheme C, the applicant is proposing the requested departure because it reduces the paved parking area at grade, and allows for greater landscaped yards and patios around the perimeter of the site. The required separation between the buildings also further buries the east units, and increases the complexity of the site circulation. The application notes the orientation of the buildings will allow more sunlight into the site and the fenestration of the courtyard facing units can be organized to mitigate privacy issues created by the increase in proximity of the buildings.

The Board indicated they were not inclined to support the requested departure as they felt it reduced an already small space between the buildings. The Board noted greater building

separation is appropriate in this portion of the project site to avoid a canyon within the auto courtyard. (DC3-A, CS1-B)

- 3. Maximum Façade Length in LR3 Zone (SMC 23.45.527.B):** The Code states 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 shall not exceed 65 percent of the length of that lot line.

Under preferred Scheme C, the applicant proposes to exceed the façade length at three locations for the two buildings located on the east side of the site. The façade length departures are relatively minor, comprised of two 10-foot sections (15 square feet of building area) and one 8 ½ - foot section (34 square feet of building area). The application notes the departure request is based on the unique property line shape as it yields an interior side lot line where there is experientially a rear lot line. The justification in the application packet notes the following:

- The requested departure allows for an efficient site design and contributes to the cohesiveness of the composition along the rear façade.
- The proposed setback along the façade exceeds the minimum required, further mitigating the impact of the departure.
- Along the north & south property lines, the requested departure allows for a cohesive architectural composition. The contributing façade length is broken up over two buildings, reducing the perceived bulk impact.
- The rear yards in these locations exceeds the minimum required, and both the rear & side yards will be heavily landscaped to buffer the edge.

The Board indicated they are inclined to consider the requested departure noting that due to the odd nature of the east lot line configuration, what the applicant has proposed better responds to the existing site conditions and adds to the design aspects of the building in conjunction with the lot line configuration. (DC2-A)

## 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-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.

**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-D Height, Bulk, and Scale**

**CS2-D-2. Existing Site Features:** Use changes in topography, site shape, and vegetation or structures to help make a successful fit with adjacent properties.

**CS2 CAPITOL HILL**

Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.

**I. Streetscape Compatibility**

**ii. Street Trees:** Provide street trees with tree grates or in planter strips

**iv. Townhouse Orientation:** Orient townhouse structures to provide pedestrian entrances to the sidewalk

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

**CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes**

**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.

**PUBLIC LIFE**

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

**PL1-B Walkways and Connections**

**PL1-B-3. Pedestrian Amenities:** Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian oriented open spaces to enliven the area and attract interest and interaction with the site and building should be considered.

**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.

**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-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-4. Views and Connections:** Locate interior uses and activities to take advantage of views and physical connections to exterior spaces and uses.

### **DC1-B Vehicular Access and Circulation**

**DC1-B-1. Access Location and Design:** Choose locations for vehicular access, service uses, and delivery areas that minimize conflict between vehicles and non-motorists wherever possible. Emphasize use of the sidewalk for pedestrians, and create safe and attractive conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.

### **DC1 CAPITOL HILL**

Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

#### **I. Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas**

**i. Dumpsters:** Consolidate and screen dumpsters to preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment.

**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-A Massing**

**DC2-A-1. Site Characteristics and Uses:** Arrange the mass of the building taking into consideration the characteristics of the site and the proposed uses of the building and its open space.

### **DC2-B Architectural and Facade Composition**

**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-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-D Scale and Texture**

**DC2-D-2. Texture:** Design the character of the building, as expressed in the form, scale, and materials, to strive for a fine-grained scale, or “texture,” particularly at the street level and other areas where pedestrians predominate.

**DC3 Open Space Concept: Integrate open space design with the building design so that they complement each 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.

**DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities**

**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.

**DC3 CAPITOL HILL**

Integrate open space design with the building design so that they complement each other.

**I. Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions**

**i. Aesthetic Consistency:** Maintain or enhance the character and aesthetic qualities of neighborhood development to provide for consistent streetscape character.

**DC4 CAPITOL HILL**

Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.

**I. Exterior Finish Materials**

**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.

- i. Use wood shingles or board and batten siding on residential structures.
- ii. Avoid wood or metal siding materials on commercial structures.
- iii. Provide operable windows, especially on storefronts.
- iv. Use materials that are consistent with the existing or intended neighborhood character, including brick, cast stone, architectural stone, terracotta details, and concrete that incorporates texture and color.
- v. Consider each building as a high-quality, long-term addition to the neighborhood; exterior design and materials should exhibit permanence and quality appropriate to the Capitol Hill neighborhood.
- vi. The use of applied foam ornamentation and EIFS (Exterior Insulation & Finish System) is discouraged, especially on ground level locations.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application, with responses to all the guidance herein.