



RECOMMENDATION ADMINISTRATIVE DESIGN REVIEW (NORTHEAST)

Record Number: **3026632-LU**

Address: **6820 Oswego PL NE**

Applicant: **Robert Humble, Hybrid Architecture**

Date: **December 7, 2018**

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

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Lowrise-3 Residential (LR-3)

Nearby Zones: (North) LR-3
 (South) LR-3
 (East) LR-3
 (West) NC2-40

Total Lot Area: 4000 Square Feet (Sq. Ft.)

Overlay District: Green Lake Residential Urban Village



The top of this image is north.
 This map is for illustrative purposes only.
 In the event of omissions, errors or differences, the documents in SDCI's file will control.

Current Development:

The proposal site is located on the east side of Oswego PL NE, midblock, between NE 70th St. to the north and NE 68th St. to the south. The proposal site is made up two 4000 square foot rectangular lots located at 6824 and 6820 Oswego with both currently occupied by a single 1.5 story, single-family residence and built in 1942.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The proposal site is located in the Green Lake neighborhood within the Green Lake Residential Urban Village. The site is east of the Lake and park of the same namesake. In the past 15 years or so Green Lake has seen a great deal of redevelopment with many residential structures being completely remodeled and enlarged, with the addition of another floor in many instances. The east side of Oswego Pl has a number of townhouses and apartments, multiple family residential structures with a landmark one-story firehouse located at the north end of the street. Some smaller multifamily structures are located at the south end of the site, and just across from the

project site to the north. Four-story or taller mixed-use commercial-residential structures are located on the west side of Oswego PI NE.

Access:

Access to the site is currently from Oswego PL NE from either a north or south direction.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

The site is not located in an Environmentally Critical Area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Land Use Application to allow a four-story 40-unit apartment building (33 Small Efficiency Dwelling Units and 7 apartments). No parking is proposed. Existing structures to be demolished.

The design packet includes materials presented to Staff, and is available online by entering the record 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

ADMINISTRATIVE EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE July 24, 2017

PUBLIC COMMENT

SDCl received numerous comment letters. The following comments, issues, and concerns were raised:

- Concerned that the proposed project will be very close to the balcony of the adjacent residential structure.
- Supported projects that will provide housing for families with children.
- Concerned about the lack of parking and impacts to the neighborhood due to the increased density.
- Concerned about impacts to privacy to adjacent townhouses.
- Concerned about construction impacts.
- Worried that the culture of neighborhood will change and become busier due to the increase in density.
- Concerned that the views from existing residences will be impacted.
- Concerned that the natural lighting into existing residential units will be diminished.

- Concerned about potential noise impacts as a result of the increased number of apartments in a quiet neighborhood.

One purpose of the design review process is for the 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 & STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, Staff provided the following siting and design guidance.

- 1. Massing:** Staff recognizes individual merits of all three massing options presented in the EDG packet. However, the design should be based on a fourth massing option that opens the building and courtyard to the street. This might be achieved by increasing the street side notch in Option 1, moving the stairs and elevator to the exterior of building in Option 2 or rotating the building footprint perpendicularly allowing for a more open central area that could become the courtyard in Option 3. A “U” shaped approach to the building footprint would make the project more open and transparent. Design guidance includes:
 - a. Develop the design based on a fourth massing alternative that incorporates a more open and transparent courtyard that is oriented toward the street. Include analysis demonstrating how this option responds to the context, site, and Design Guidelines. Identify departures needed for this alternative. **(CS2-C-2, CS2-D-1, CS2-D-5, CS3-A-1, CS3-I-v, PL3-I-I, DC2-A-1)**
 - b. Use articulation and secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of large expanse of the street facing building façade. Consider incorporating dormer windows and pitched roofs, as shown in other buildings along the street. **(CS3-I-v, DC2-A-2, DC2-B-1)**
 - c. The project should use high quality materials, architectural elements that emphasis building entrances, and fenestration to enhance modulation and create perceived movement along the facades. **(CS3-I-v, DC2-A-2, DC2-B-1, DC2-C-, DC2-D-1)**
- 2. Entries and Street Frontage:** The solid physical barrier between the sidewalk and the front setback/pet area should be more open and transparent.

- a. Demonstrate how the design of the ‘gardens’ at the street frontage will create usable outdoor space for residents rather than a space for the public domain. **(PL1-B-3, PL3-I)**
 - b. Emphasize the design of the front entry to create an architectural statement with greater visual cues that announces its location. **(PL1-I, PL2-A&B, PL3-A, PL4-A)**
 - c. Relocate the pet area to an alternative location further away from the front entry. **(CS2-III-ii, PL2-I, PL3-B-3, DC4-D)**
- 3. Architectural Character.** Demonstrate how the proposed design responds to nearby architectural context. Several buildings along the street have gable roofs, varied roof heights and dormer windows. There is also a unique one-story firehouse at the north end of the street with very distinct architectural features. The design should respond to the existing architectural of the street and Green Lake as a whole. **(CS2-A-2, CS2-C-2, CS3-I-v , CS3-A-1, CS3-A-4, DC4-A-1)**
- a. Materials and façade treatments will be critical to the success of the massing. Explore texture and variety in the materials to create more visual interest.
- 4. Courtyard.** Staff supports an open courtyard concept but the fountain should be replaced with seating and other amenities to create usable outdoor area.
- a. The design of the residential courtyard space should be designed to maximize usable space for residents. **(PL1-I, PL2-I, PL3-A, CS2-III-ii, DC3-A, DC3-B, DC4-C, DC4-D.2)**

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines identified by Staff as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION DECEMBER 7, 2018

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following comments, issues, and concerns were raised:

- Concerned that the EDG Report did not address the public comments adequately.
- Concerned that no parking is being provided.
- Supported the added height of the structure as a means of increasing housing density.

One purpose of the design review process is for the 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 SDCL 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.

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PRIORITIES & STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Massing:

- a. Staff appreciates how the design team has introduced additional articulation and secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of large expanse of the street facing building façade on their preferred option, Option 3. **(CS3-I-v, DC2-A-2, DC2-B-1)**
- b. Staff agrees with migrating forward of the building footprint and how the southeast corner of the upper floor has been pushed back away from the street to accommodate an exterior patio at the upper level, resulting in increased building modulation and visual interest. **(CS3-I-v, DC2-A-2, DC2-B-1)**

2. Entries and Street Frontage:

- a. Staff appreciates how the front yard garden space and entry transition have been redesigned to clearly identify the transition between the public and usable private space along the street frontage, which has resulted in a unique experience. **(PL1-I, PL2-A&B, PL3-A, PL1-B-3, PL4-A, PL3-I)**
- b. Staff supports the redesigned front entry and street facing building façade that announces the location of the front entry. **(DC4-A-1, DC4-C, DC4-D)**
- c. Staff supports the removal of the pet area per EDG guidance, the introduction of the field boulders and ornamental tree in its place, and the low planting scheme at the base of the building in front of the bicycle storage room. **(CS2-III-ii, PL2-I, PL3-B-3, DC4-D)**
- d. Staff appreciates how the main entry has now been widened and the concrete wall that shielded the trash room has been replaced with a more pedestrian friendly bike and mail lounge that features increased glazing for more transparency. **(PL1-I, PL2-A&B, PL3-A, PL4-A)**
- e. Staff supports the replacement of the security gate that was previously located at the face of the building with a lower gate that is now located closer to the sidewalk, allowing for a less encumbered entry into the front yard area and better line of sight into the courtyard and interior of the building. **(PL1-I, PL2-A&B, PL3-A, PL4-A)**

3. Materials:

- a. Staff supports the use of the lap siding, which adds texture and visual interest, white stucco at the pedestrian level, and finished wood accents along the walkway and as fencing material. **(CS3-I-v, DC2-A-2, DC2-B-1, DC2-C-, DC2-D-1)**
- b. Staff supports the added architectural features using a large number of windows, intermittent balconies and smaller balcony doors, which give the façade an interesting rhythm added visual interest. **(CS3-I-v, DC2-A-2, DC2-B-1, DC2-C-, DC2-D-1)**

CONTEXT & 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-A Location in the City and Neighborhood

CS2-A-1. Sense of Place: Emphasize attributes that give a distinctive sense of place. Design the building and open spaces to enhance areas where a strong identity already exists, and create a sense of place where the physical context is less established.

CS2-A-2. Architectural Presence: Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly.

CS2-C Relationship to the Block

CS2-C-2. Mid-Block Sites: Look to the uses and scales of adjacent buildings for clues about how to design a mid-block building. Continue a strong street-edge and respond to datum lines of adjacent buildings at the first three floors.

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.

Green Lake Supplemental Guidance:

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-III. STREETScape COMPATIBILITY

CS2-III-ii. Multifamily Residential Areas: Landscaping in the required front setbacks of new multifamily development is an important siting and design consideration to help rein-force desirable streetscape continuity.

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-4. Evolving Neighborhoods: In neighborhoods where architectural character is evolving or otherwise in transition, explore ways for new development to establish a positive and desirable context for others to build upon in the future.

Green Lake Supplemental Guidance:

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

CS3-I. ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

CS3-I-v. Facade Articulation - Multi-family residential structures: The façade articulation of new multifamily residential buildings (notably in Lowrise zones) should be compatible with the surrounding single-family architectural context. Architectural details similar to those found on single-family homes in Green Lake from the early 1900's can add further interest to a building, and lend buildings a human scale.

Consider the following features:

- a. Pitched roof
- b. Covered front porch
- c. Vertically proportioned windows
- d. Window trim and eave boards
- e. Elements typical of neighborhood house forms

PUBLIC LIFE

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

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.

Green Lake Supplemental Guidance:

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

PL1-I. RESIDENTIAL OPEN SPACE

PL1-I-i. Creating a substantial courtyard-style open space (see sketch to the left) that is visually accessible to the public and that extends to the public realm.

PL1-I-ii. Setting back development to improve a view corridor.

PL1-I-iii. Setting upper stories of buildings back to provide solar access and/or to reduce impacts on neighboring single-family residences.

PL1-I-iv. Providing open space within the streetscape or other public rights-of-way contiguous with the site. Such public spaces should be large enough to include streetscape amenities that encourage gathering. For example, a curb bulb with outdoor seating adjacent to active retail would be acceptable.

PL2 Walkability: Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.

PL2-A Accessibility

PL2-A-1. Access for All: Provide access for people of all abilities in a manner that is fully integrated into the project design. Design entries and other primary access points such that all visitors can be greeted and welcomed through the front door.

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.

PL2-D Wayfinding

PL2-D-1. Design as Wayfinding: Use design features as a means of wayfinding wherever possible.

Green Lake Supplemental Guidance:

PL2. Walkability: Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.

PL2-I. PEDESTRIAN OPEN SPACES AND ENTRANCES

PL2-I-ii. Streetscape Amenities: New developments are encouraged to work through the Design Review process and with interested citizens to provide features that enhance the public realm. Code departures, as set forth at SMC 23.41.012, will be considered for projects that propose enhancements to the public realm. The project proponent should provide an acceptable plan for, but not limited to, features such as:

- a. Curb bulbs adjacent to active retail spaces
- b. Pedestrian-oriented street lighting

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.

PL3-B Residential Edges

PL3-B-1. Security and Privacy: Provide security and privacy for residential buildings through the use of a buffer or semi-private space between the development and the street or neighboring buildings.

PL3-B-2. Ground-level Residential: Privacy and security issues are particularly important in buildings with ground-level housing, both at entries and where windows are located overlooking the street.

PL3-B-4. Interaction: Provide opportunities for interaction among residents and neighbors.

Green Lake Supplemental Guidance:

PL3. Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human activity and interaction at street level.

PL3-I. HUMAN ACTIVITY

PL3-I-i. Residential Buildings Residences on the ground floor should be raised for residents' privacy, if allowed by site conditions. Well landscaped, shallow front yard setbacks are also typical and appropriate. (See guideline CS2).

PL4 Active Transportation: Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.

PL4-A Entry Locations and Relationships

PL4-A-2. Connections to All Modes: Site the primary entry in a location that logically relates to building uses and clearly connects all major points of access.

PL4-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists

PL4-B-2. Bike Facilities: Facilities such as bike racks and storage, bike share stations, shower facilities and lockers for bicyclists should be located to maximize convenience, security, and safety.

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.

DC1-A-4. Views and Connections: Locate interior uses and activities to take advantage of views and physical connections to exterior spaces and uses.

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-A-2. Reducing Perceived Mass: Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of larger projects.

DC2-B Architectural and Façade Composition

DC2-B-1. Façade Composition: Design all building façades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all façades are attractive and well-proportioned.

DC2-C Secondary Architectural Features

DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest: Add depth to façades 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.

DC2-D Scale and Texture

DC2-D-1. Human Scale: Incorporate architectural features, elements, and details that are of human scale into the building facades, entries, retaining walls, courtyards, and exterior spaces in a manner that is consistent with the overall architectural concept

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-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.

DC4-C Lighting

DC4-C-1. Functions: Use lighting both to increase site safety in all locations used by pedestrians and to highlight architectural or landscape details and features such as entries, signs, canopies, plantings, and art.

DC4-D Trees, Landscape, and Hardscape Materials

DC4-D-2. Hardscape Materials: Use exterior courtyards, plazas, and other hard surfaced areas as an opportunity to add color, texture, and/or pattern and enliven public areas through the use of distinctive and durable paving materials. Use permeable materials wherever possible.

DC4-D-4. Place Making: Create a landscape design that helps define spaces with significant elements such as trees.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

Staff's recommendation on the requested departure(s) are 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 following departures were requested:

1. **Structure width and façade length limits in LR zones (SMC 23.45.527):** The code requires that 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

The applicant is requesting a 12% departure from maximum allowable combined length which is in this case 65'. The proposed project has been designed with a facade length 73'-0" due in part to the increased side setback of the building which is 12% larger than required. Side setbacks are required to be 5'-0" minimum and 7'-0" average. This project has been designed to include an average setback of 7.8' on the north and 7.84' on the south, which allow for more separation from the adjacent townhouse properties to the north and south. **(CS2-D.5)**

After reviewing the proposed setback layout and window placement analysis, Staff preliminarily recommends approval of the departure request as it will result in additional space between the adjacent townhouse properties to the north and south. The added setback also results in greater visual interest as well as façade modulation, better meeting the intent of Design Guidelines **CS2-D-5. Respect for Adjacent Sites, CS3-A-1. Fitting Old and New Together, CS3-I-v. Facade Articulation**)

2. **Setbacks and separations (SMC 23.45.518):** The Code requires that LR zones setbacks as shown in Table A for 23.45.518 for apartments include a minimum of 15 feet for rear setbacks if there is no alley.

The applicant is requesting approval of this departure to allow for a minimum of 11 feet for the rear setback. The project has been designed with a an 11'-0" rear setback due to the increased front setback, which is only required to be 5'-0" but has been increased 320% to 16'-0" to align more closely with the neighboring properties to the north and south. The resulting design helps to create a more cohesive alignment with the neighborhood and better meets the intent of Design Guidelines **CS2-D-5. Respect for Adjacent Sites, CS3-A-1. Fitting Old and New Together, CS3-I-v. Facade Articulation CS2-III-ii STREETScape COMPATIBILITY)**

Staff preliminarily recommends approval of the departure request, as it aids in preserving the existing building setback alignment along the street frontage of Oswego Pl.

STAFF DIRECTION

After considering the site and context, public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, Staff recommended APPROVAL of the project design and departures.