



# City of Seattle

Department of Construction & Inspections

Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN  
REVIEW

## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE SOUTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

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Project Number: 3026661

Address: 4417 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SW

Applicant: NK Architects

Date of Meeting: Thursday, May 18, 2017

Board Members Present: Matt Zinski (Chair)  
Donald Caffrey  
Crystal Loya  
Robin Murphy, substitute

Board Members Absent: Alexandra Moravec

SDCI Staff Present: Sean Conrad

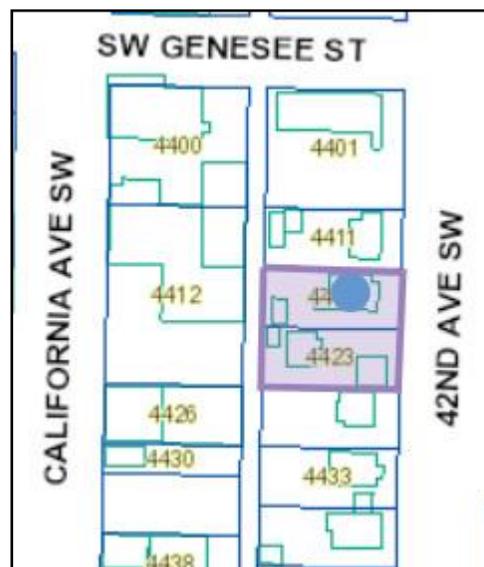
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### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial 2 – 40' height limit (NC2-40)

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

Project site area: 11,500 square feet



**Current Development:**

The site is located on the west side of 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SW, between SW Oregon Street and SW Genesee Street, one block east of the commercial corridor along California Avenue SW. The project site includes two lots, one lot is developed with a single-family residence, the other lot has two detached single-family residences. An improved alley, 16-feet wide, is located on the west side of the project site. Three Exceptional trees are located on the project site along with landscaping customary to residential development.

**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

The project site is located within the West Seattle Junction Hub Urban Village, and only two blocks to the northeast of the intersection of California Ave SW and SW Alaska St. The neighborhood is very pedestrian friendly, and there are multiple shops, restaurants, cafés, and grocery stores all within walking distance of the site. North of the project site is a single-family residence, south of the site is a small parking lot used by the Fraternal Order of the Eagles with a relatively new four-story apartment building, Junction Flats, just south of the parking lot. Across the street are two churches with associated buildings. The Lutheran Church operates a school, Hope Lutheran School, on its church campus.

**Access:**

Access to the project site is provided by 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SW on its east side and an improved 16-foot wide alley on its west side.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:**

No critical areas are located on or adjacent to the project site.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposal is to allow 4-story apartment building containing 58 units and 4 live-work units on the ground floor. Parking for 29 vehicles is proposed below grade. The three existing houses and associated outbuildings will 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 SDCI:

**Mailing**    **Public Resource Center**

**Address:** 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000  
P.O. Box 34019  
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

**Email:**    [PRC@seattle.gov](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

During the Early Design Guidance meeting the following comments were provided by the public:

- Questioned whether bike racks will be provided in the front of the building along 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave. SW.
- Concerned about the proposed access driveway on the north side of the site and whether fencing or railing will be installed to prevent children in neighboring property from falling in driveway ramp.
- Requested the driveway move further south from the north property line to provide a greater buffer to the property on the project's north side.
- Concerned with the proximity of the building along the project's north property line will create shadow impacts to residence north of the site.
- Preferred Option 1 as it provides more sunlight to the residence on the north side of the project site.
- Requested the Douglas Fir tree on the east side of site, near the sidewalk, be removed.

The department received two written comments. The comments focused on insufficient off-street parking and potential impacts to on-street parking in the area if the project is developed.

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 off-street parking and on-street parking 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. Massing.**

- a. The Board favored the proposed massing of Option 3, the applicant's preferred option, due to the major moves in massing and how they relate well to the neighborhood development. The Board also noted that Option 3 pushes the mass of the building to the south property line, allowing more light into the backyard of the residence to the north. (CS2-D)

- b. The Board requested minor massing refinements with Option 3 when it returns to the Board at the Recommendation phase. The minor massing refinements noted by the Board include the use of bays along the 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave façade, how could they be integrated better with the building, and providing the opportunity for more daylighting to the residence to the north. The Board would like the applicant to demonstrate, through sketches and iterative images, how the refinements have taken shape from the early design guidance meeting to the recommendation meeting. (CS2-West Seattle)

## **2. Exceptional Trees/Open Space.**

- a. The Board was receptive to the removal of all three Exceptional trees on the site however they wanted to see further development of the landscape plan and how it creates a viable rooftop habitat. The Board requested the landscape plan include specific details on the tree species proposed, size of the trees at planting, especially on the rooftop amenity space, to convince the Board that removing all three Exceptional trees is appropriate due to the proposed diversity of landscaping proposed. (DC4-D, CS1-D)

## **3. Building Articulation.**

- a. The Board pointed to the number of bays on the street side of the building and upper level setbacks that need further study to provide better connection of the bays to the massing of the building. The Board thought the 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue façade will need more work before the recommendation meeting. (DC2-B)
- b. The Board stated that they struggled to find an overarching design concept to drive the design forward. The Board suggested the applicant explore connecting the bays and building articulation in a way that provides a design that is simplified and clear in design intent. (DC2-B)
- c. Acknowledging public concern, the Board requested the applicant further study the north and south façades and how they could provide articulation, colors and/or texture to avoid a large blank façade, especially to the neighboring property on the north side of the project site. (CS2-West Seattle, CS3-A)
- d. In response to public comment, the Board requested the applicant provide a more sensitive transition on the northeast corner of the building to address the property owners concerns of shadow impacts. The Board suggested maximizing the open space/daylighting to the neighbor to the north to create a better relationship. (CS1-B, CS2-D)

## **4. Driveway**

- a. Acknowledging public concern, the Board would like to review additional information on the driveway access including a design for the fencing/railing being considered for safety purposes and how this will be aesthetically pleasing to the neighboring property. (DC1-B)
- b. The Board had concerns with the driveway interaction with the alley, for safety and visual impacts, as the driveway will not be at the grade of the alley but downgrade, creating a void which will be very much present along the alley. The Board requested details of the building treatment of the walls on the east and south sides of the driveway to address the potential blank facade. (DC1-C)

## 5. Live/Work Units

- a. The Board requested detailed information on the four live/work units proposed along 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue at the Recommendation phase. The Board will be very interested in reviewing the layout and functionality of these units and how they will relate to the neighborhood and help to activate the streetscape. (PL3-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 departure was requested with Option 3:

1. **Driveway Slope Standards (SMC 23.54.030.D.3):** The Code section states that no portion of a driveway, whether located on a lot or on a right-of-way, shall exceed a slope of 15 percent. The maximum 15 percent slope shall apply in relation to both the current grade of the right-of-way to which the driveway connects, and to the proposed finished grade of the right-of-way if it is different from the current grade. The ends of a driveway shall be adjusted to accommodate an appropriate crest and sag.

Under preferred Option 3, the applicant is proposing to exceed the 15 percent slope requirement, requesting the driveway slope be permitted at a 20 percent slope for a length of approximately 84 feet. The application packet notes that with a shallow and relatively flat site allowing a steeper driveway slope will provide clearance for an accessible van utilizing the ramp, allow the parking garage to be enveloped by the building design and not become its own feature and provide increased on-site parking for residents.

The Board indicated they are inclined to support the requested departure and wanted to see additional information detailing how a safe entry/exit onto the alley will still be provided with the steeper driveway condition, how the visual impacts of the driveway will be addressed and the design of the driveway barrier element along the north side. (DC1-B, DC1-C)

### 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](#).

<b>CONTEXT &amp; SITE</b>
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**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.

**CS1-D Plants and Habitat**

**CS1-D-1. On-Site Features:** Incorporate on-site natural habitats and landscape elements into project design and connect those features to existing networks of open spaces and natural habitats wherever possible. Consider relocating significant trees and vegetation if retention is not feasible.

**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-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.

**CS2 WEST SEATTLE**

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

**III. Height, Bulk and Scale**

**iii. Facade Articulation:** New buildings should use architectural methods including modulation, color, texture, entries, materials and detailing to break up the façade—particularly important for long buildings—into sections and character consistent with traditional, multi-bay commercial buildings prevalent in the neighborhood’s commercial core (see map 1, page 1).

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

**CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes**

**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.

**PUBLIC LIFE**

**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-3. Buildings with Live/Work Uses:** Maintain active and transparent facades in the design of live/work residences. Design the first floor so it can be adapted to other commercial use as needed in the future.

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

**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-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-C Parking and Service Uses**

**DC1-C-2. Visual Impacts:** Reduce the visual impacts of parking lots, parking structures, entrances, and related signs and equipment as much as possible.

**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.

**DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.**

**DC4-A Building Materials**

**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-B Signage**

**DC4-B-1. Scale and Character:** Add interest to the streetscape with exterior signs and attachments that are appropriate in scale and character to the project and its environs.

**DC4-D Trees, Landscape, and Hardscape Materials**

**DC4-D-1. Choice of Plant Materials:** Reinforce the overall architectural and open space design concepts through the selection of landscape materials.

**DC4-D-3. Long Range Planning:** Select plants that upon maturity will be of appropriate size, scale, and shape to contribute to the site as intended.

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

## **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.