



City of Seattle

Department of Construction and Inspections
Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN
REVIEW

DESIGN GUIDANCE STREAMLINED DESIGN REVIEW

Project Number: 3026940

Address: 1535 NW 90th Street

Applicant: Lemons Architecture, LLC

Date of Report: March 27, 2017

SDCI Staff: Sean Conrad

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Multifamily Lowrise zone (LR2)

Nearby Zones: (North) Single Family Residential – 7200 square foot minimum lot size (SF 7200)
 (South) Single Family Residential – 5000 square foot minimum lot size (SF 5000)
 (East) LR2
 (West) LR2

Lot Area: 7,801 square feet



Current Development:

The site is currently developed with a duplex on the north half of the lot with a backyard on the south half of the site. The site is relatively level with a slope on the west side of the site.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The immediate area is a mix of single and multifamily residential development ranging in height between one and three stories. A public school (Whitman Middle School and Soundview Playground) are located across NW 90th Street to the north. One block to the east, along 15th Avenue NW (Arterial Street), the neighborhood takes on a more distinctive commercial presence with several businesses including retail, office, and restaurant uses.

Access:

The site can be accessed from the north by NW 90th Street and from the south by NW 89th Street. Northwest 90th Street is a fully developed street with curb, gutters, street trees and sidewalks. Northwest 89th Street is narrow, approximately 12 feet wide and absent of curbs, gutters, sidewalk, and street trees.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

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

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Streamlined Design Review for a three-story, three-unit townhouse building with parking for three vehicles located within the structure. Existing residential building to remain.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following public comments were received:

- Requested project owner demonstrate the technical and financial ability to complete the project in a timely fashion.
- Questioned the length of construction related impacts to vehicle access and pedestrian impacts along NW 89th Street for neighboring properties.
- Concerned with the environmental impacts the project has the potential to create. Specifically, concerned about impacts to storm water system, vehicle traffic and loss of trees in the neighborhood.
- Concerned about how this project adds to the City's need for affordable housing.
- The neighborhood is not changing in a positive way.

The purpose of the Streamlined Design Review process is to receive comments from the public, 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 and siting alternatives. Issues brought up by the public such as impacts to access, environmental impacts, additional traffic, and storm water impacts are addressed when a code review is conducted on the proposed development. Comments regarding the price of future townhouse units and the project owner's financial feasibility are not within the scope of this design review project.

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/>

LAND USE CODE COMPLIANCE

During the review of this project, the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) provided staff with comments, one of which requested street trees be provided with the development of the project site. The project site is a through lot, having street frontage on both NW 90th St. and NW 89th St. Consulting with land use planning staff, it was determined that street trees would be required along the project's frontage of NW 89th St. In addition, staff briefly reviewed the site plan and noted the following land use compliance issues:

- SMC 23.45.536.E requires garage doors in LR zones facing the street to have a minimum setback of 15 feet from the street lot line, and be no closer to the street lot line than the street-facing façade of the structure. The proposed garage doors are 10 feet from the street lot line.
- SMC 23.54.030.F limits the number of curb cuts for residential uses on a lot with street frontage of 80 feet or less to one permitted curb cut. The proposed project has 60 feet of street frontage and anticipates three garages, 10 feet from the property line, necessitating three curb cuts.

The two code sections above will require modifying the proposed site design and possibly the entire three-unit townhouse structure. See the Staff Note #1 listed at the end of this report that states that this review does not include a full zoning review, which will occur when the MUP plans and/or building permit is submitted. Therefore, other code requirements may require additional modifications for code compliance. Significant deviation from the submitted plan set reviewed for this report may require a new streamline design review application, public notification, and updated streamline design guidance report.

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 Planner provided the following siting and design guidance. The Planner identified the Citywide Design Guidelines & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

1. Massing

- a. Staff supports the open railings provided for the second floor and roof top decks to minimize the bulk of the building. (DC2-C)
- b. Staff recommends maintaining the minimum required side yard building setbacks and minimum 10-foot separation from the existing duplex on the project site. With these minimum setbacks in place, the massing of the structure would better fit in the context of recent townhouse development along the street. (CS3-A, CS2-D)

2. Composition & Materials:

- a. Contemporary construction should create compatibility with the neighborhood context. The height, materials and massing of the proposed townhouse units appear to be informed by recent townhouse developments to the east and west of the project site. The applicant has included materials such as black and white fiber cement panels and wood finish composite panel siding in the new units which complement the recent housing development to the east and west of the site. These elements are important to the success of the design concept and compatibility with the architectural context and should be maintained. (CS3-A, DC2-A, DC2-C)
- b. Staff supports the proposed material palette, including the use of fiber cement and composite panels. Staff encourages the use of durable, quality materials respectful of existing materiality context of the established neighborhood. (CS3-A, DC4-A)
- c. Maintain the amount of glazing as shown on the east and west elevations to provide privacy for neighboring residents. (CS2-D)

3. Site Planning, Service Uses, Landscaping & Open Space:

- a. Staff strongly supports the proposed retention of the existing duplex along NW 90th Street as it maintains the current building pattern for housing setback and size along the street. (CS3-A)
- b. Apart from installing an additional walkway from the townhouse units to the sidewalk along NW 90th Street, the existing landscaping between the duplex and the sidewalk should be maintained. (PL3-B, DC4-D)
- c. Staff recommends providing illumination along the walkway from the sidewalk to the townhouse entry doors to increase safety and identification for the townhouse units. The pedestrian pathway lighting will need to be designed to avoid light spillage and glare onto adjacent properties. (DC4-C, PL2-B)
- d. Provide details on the pavers used for the driveways to each of the units. The pavers should extend to the edge of the asphalt roadway to provide a clean, uninterrupted hard surface from the garage door to the street. Avoid using river rocks as a gap measure between the pavers and asphalt edge as shown in figure 1. Instead staff recommends installing the pavers up to the asphalt edge. (PL3-A)

Figure 1:



- e. The conceptual landscape plan on page 18 provides very little landscaping between the townhouse units and the existing duplex. Staff recommends a variety of evergreen and deciduous ground cover, plants and size appropriate bushes within the corridor created by the new townhouses. (DC2-D, DC4-D)

4. Entry & Circulation:

- a. Staff supports maintaining the street facing entry for the existing residence along NW 90th Street. If the townhouse units will be addressed off NW 90th Street, ensure adequate address signage and mailboxes are provided at the street. (DC4-B, PL3-A)
- b. The plans do not identify a location for trash and recycling containers. Staff suggests locating the trash and recycling containers within the garages of each of the units. (DC1-C)

5. Streetscape Compatibility & Connection to the Street.

- a. Minimal details regarding the landscape plan were provided. While the landscape concept approach on page 18 provides some early ideas, the landscaping between the townhouse units and NW 89th Street should include a variety of ground cover and low growing bushes to provide clear vision for vehicles entering and exiting the garages. (DC3-B, DC4-D)
- b. The garage door should be designed to relate to the overall design concept. As shown on page 25 (south elevation) window panels should be incorporated into the garage door design and relate to the glazing of the townhouse structure. The materials should be durable and high-quality. (DC2-C, DC4-A-1)

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

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-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.

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.

PUBLIC LIFE

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

PL2-B Safety and Security

PL2-B-2. Lighting for Safety: Provide lighting at sufficient lumen intensities and scales, including pathway illumination, pedestrian and entry lighting, and/or security lights.

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-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.

DESIGN CONCEPT

DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

DC1-C Parking and Service Uses

DC1-C-4. Service Uses: Locate and design service entries, loading docks, and trash receptacles away from pedestrian areas or to a less visible portion of the site to reduce possible impacts of these facilities on building aesthetics and pedestrian circulation.

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-C Secondary Architectural Features

DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest: Add depth to facades where appropriate by incorporating balconies, canopies, awnings, decks, or other secondary elements into the façade design. Add detailing at the street level in order to create interest for the pedestrian and encourage active street life and window shopping (in retail areas).

DC2-C-2. Dual Purpose Elements: Consider architectural features that can be dual purpose— adding depth, texture, and scale as well as serving other project functions.

DC2-C-3. Fit With Neighboring Buildings: Use design elements to achieve a successful fit between a building and its neighbors.

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-B Open Space Uses and Activities

DC3-B-1. Meeting User Needs: Plan the size, uses, activities, and features of each open space to meet the needs of expected users, ensuring each space has a purpose and function.

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

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

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD ADJUSTMENTS

Design Review Staff’s recommendation on the requested adjustment(s) will be based upon the adjustment’s potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the adjustment(s).

At the time of Design Guidance, the following adjustments were requested:

1. Side Setback Requirements (SMC 23.45.518.A): The Code requires a 5-foot minimum side setback for facades less than 40 feet in length.

The applicant is requesting a reduction for both side setbacks, to a 3-foot setback from the east and west property lines. In the applicant's opinion, the reduction of the side setbacks will fit the project into the site context better, preserve the existing house and help to maximize daylight for interior spaces. No design guidelines were identified to support the requested adjustment.

After review of the above cited design guidelines and existing development patterns on the block, Staff is not supportive of the setback adjustment request. The townhouse structure will need to meet the required setbacks along the east and west property boundaries. Arriving at this recommendation staff made the following findings:

- The existing duplex is approximately 5 feet from the east and west property lines. Maintaining the 5-foot setbacks for the new townhouse structure would not deviate from the site context of the existing duplex. Meeting the required setbacks may decrease the amount of glazing on the south side of the structure. However, the applicant has designed the structure with a least half or more of south facing facades on the second and third floors with large windows to provide ample sunlight into these two floors. (CS2-D)
- The neighborhood is slowly evolving, with several properties east and west of the project site with townhouses similar to those proposed in this application, on land formerly used as a backyard. Three of these townhouse projects are located within two lots of the project site, with one immediately adjacent to the site on its west side. All three of the townhouse projects have maintained the required 5-foot side setback.

Therefore, Staff recommends maintaining the side yard setbacks finding that the required setback better fits with design guideline CS3-A-4, Evolving Neighborhoods, CS2-D-1, Existing Development and Zoning, and provides a better response to the site conditions of the adjacent structures within the immediate area. (CS3-A, CS2-D)

2. Separations Between Multiple Structures (SMC 23.45.518.F.1): The Code requires a minimum separation of 10 feet between principal structures at any two points on different interior facades.

The applicant proposes a 50% reduction to the required separation. The applicant notes that the reduced separation will bring more privacy for the residents and make the living space more comfortable. The adjustment explanation also states the reduction provides opportunities for interaction among residents and is helpful for fitting the project into context. No design guidelines were identified to support the requested adjustment.

After review of the above cited design guidelines and existing development patterns on the block, Staff is not supportive of the separation adjustment request. The townhouse structure will need to meet the required 10-foot minimum building separation to the existing duplex. Arriving at this recommendation staff made the following findings:

- Lots to the east and west of the project site have been redeveloped with townhouses with a similar density and size as the proposed townhouses. The three townhouse developments mentioned in item 1: *side setback requirements*, also meet or exceed the required minimum 10-foot building separation. For context purposes, reducing the required separation distance would be out of context for the recently completed redevelopment in this neighborhood. (CS2-A, CS3-A)
- Meeting the required 10-foot separation will continue to provide a place for residents to have interactions at an appropriate scale between the two structures. This separation, at 10 feet, can better accommodate landscaping at front entries and light within the corridor. It is unclear how a reduction of 5-feet will increase the privacy for residents on the project site given the proposed density and surrounding development. (DC2-D)

STAFF DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the Design Guidance, SDCI Staff recommended the project should move forward to building permit application in response to the Design Guidance provided.

1. Please be aware that this report is an assessment on how the project is meeting the intent of the Design Guidelines. This review does not include a full zoning review. Zoning review will occur when the MUP plans and/or building permit is submitted. If needed and where applicable, SDR adjustments may be requested in response to zoning corrections.
2. If applicable, please prepare your Master Use Permit for SEPA review with a thorough zoning analysis listing the 23.45 and SMC 23.54 code section criteria, showing both required and proposed information (include page number where you graphically show compliance). You may want to review Tip 201 (<http://web1.seattle.gov/dpd/cams/CamList.aspx>) and may also want to review the MUP information here: <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/permits/permittypes/mupoverview/default.htm>
3. Along with your building permit application, please include a narrative response to the guidance provided in this report.
4. All drawings should be legible and consistent. In the building permit plans, please include a well-developed landscape plan and a lighting plan.