



**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE
NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

Project Number: 3028624

Address: 12729 30th Ave NE

Applicant: Chip Kouba, Ecco Design Inc.

Date of Meeting: Monday, February 16, 2018

Board Members Present: Eric Blank (Chair)
James Marria
Brian Bishop
Ivana Begley, substitute

Board Members Absent: Anita Jeerage

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

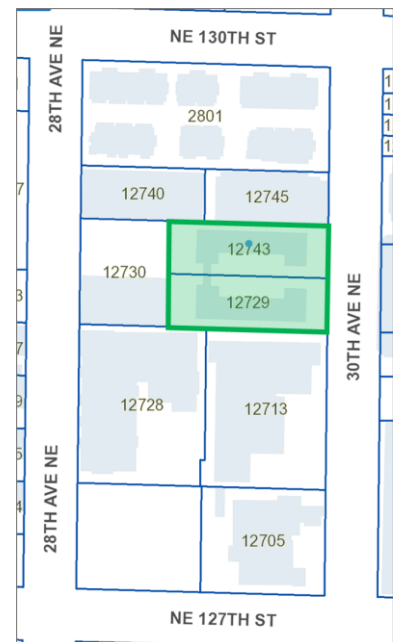
SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial 3 Zone, with 40 foot height limit (NC 3-40)

Nearby Zones: North – NC3-65
South – NC3-65
East – NC3-65
West -- NC3-65

Overlay Districts: Laker City North Neighborhood Planning Area,
Hub Urban Village
Frequent Transit Corridor
(No Parking Requirement)

Project Area: 21,613 square feet (sq. ft.)



Current Development:

The proposal site is located on the west side of 30th Ave NE, mid-block between NE 130th St to the north and NE 127th St to the south. The site consists of two separate parcels located at 12743 and 12729 30th Ave NE. The property located at 12729 is currently occupied by a single-story 4-plex, multi-residential structure built in 1954. The property at 12743 located to the north is also occupied by a single-story 4-plex, multi-residential structure built in 1954. The two structures are opposing “C” shaped buildings, placed around a central yard area.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The proposal site is located within the northwestern portion of the Lake City neighborhood within the smaller confines of the Olympic Hills neighborhood area. The site located midblock on 30th Ave NE between NE 130th St and NE 127th St which is a primary pedestrian thoroughfare for users wanting to avoid the heavy vehicular traffic along Lake City Way NE (SR-522) located to the east.

Located at the southwest corner of NE 127th St and 30th Ave NE is the recently approved 6-story, 70 unit apartment building. Other nearby buildings include the one and two-story brick clad Lake City Medical Clinic built in 1980, the back of house operations for stores located with the one-story Lake City Center strip mall. To the north of the strip mall is a six-story senior apartment complex. Further north are three story townhomes, and newer multi-family and mixed-use buildings ranging from four to six stories tall. Single family residences are located further to the north, west, and east.

Access:

Access to the site is via 30th Ave NE. The driveway leads to a paved parking apron which is currently approximately four feet higher than the yard area.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

The site is not located in an Environmentally Critical Area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a proposal to construct a seven story, 252-unit apartment building with approximately 2,000 sq. ft. of commercial at grade. Structured parking for 20 vehicles to be provided at grade. Existing structures to be demolished. The proposal will require rezoning the site to Neighborhood Commercial 3 with a 75’ height limit (NC3-75).

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE February 26, 2018

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3028624) 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 SDCl:

Mailing Address: Public Resource Center
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

PUBLIC COMMENT

At the EDG meeting, the following comments were provided:

- Asked if the project will be owned by the City.
- Asked if tenants will be compensation for moving expenses.
- Asked if there would be staff available if problems or medical incidents were to develop on site.
- Suggested that development would need to be properly monitored with eyes on the street due to undesirable activity in the surrounding area.
- Suggested that the project should not provide landscaping areas where people can hide out.
- Asked who will be using the parking.
- Stated that buildings coming into the neighborhood should not be reflective of red brick storefronts of Capitol Hill, but rather buildings with bold interesting shapes reflective of the Lake City auto row character of past decades.
- Suggested that there is a preference for bold colors and shapes and angles for new buildings.
- Stated that the three non-street facing facades should be more than blank wall with 'punch in' windows.
- Stated that there is an increasing lack of parking for small business clients due to the direction of the zoning code.
- Verbalized support for massing option E with the courtyards that face southward which allows for access to light and air but suggested that it could be combined with Option C, with the east facing courtyard.
- Suggested that the streetscape should be energized along the pedestrian sidewalk as there is a lack of modulation or stepping back of the structure.
- Stated that the building should be designed with greater respect for the human scale.
- Stated that there should be greater sensitivity to the south facing façade and its relationship to adjacent buildings.
- Suggested that the corner entry for the preferred options is 'odd' as it is adjacent to the 90 degree parking and dumpsters of the adjacent site.

- Appreciated the preferred option with its central courtyard area that is more protective of residence but suggested that there should be more modulation and possibly reduced building height.
- Suggested that the use of lighter colors, but not reflective colors, would be beneficial to the north facing facades of the adjacent buildings in terms of reflecting lighting into the building.
- Suggested that the floor plan could be flipped so that there could be a shared dumpster and garage pickup location along the south east corner of the building that could reduce the need for an additional curb cut and vehicle access across the sidewalk.

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. Neither SDCI, nor the Design Review process have authority over zoning designations, unit size, density, or parking enforcement.

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/>

<p>PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS</p>
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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 Options:** The Board agreed that the preferred scheme, Option O, is the most appropriate massing option to achieve the intent to create an urban haven for adults with Autism. The Board also agreed with the design of the centralized courtyard which could encourage social interaction in a controlled and safe environment. The Board supported the single commercial space and the relationship to the interior spaces and the stack of communal kitchens. The Board especially liked how the communal kitchens were stacked over the main entry which creates opportunities for engaging the street. The Board suggested that the applicant would need to coordinate the placement of the solid waste with the adjacent property as there shouldn’t be dumpsters sitting out along the street near the entryway. **(CS2-D-5, CS3-A-2, DC1-A-4)**
2. **Courtyard Scheme:** The Board suggested that there is an opportunity for the design of the courtyard which is open to the sky, to be placed in a manner that allows natural light to stream into the Gymnasium located on the main floor. **(DC1-A-2, DC1-A-4, DC3-A-1)**

3. **Architectural Concept:** The Board noted that if the building maintains the smaller setbacks, then the project will most likely use smaller windows. If that is the case then the non-street facing facades must have an interesting composition. The Board suggested that there is the potential for using the south facing stair tower to break up the south facing building façade along with the use of small punched windows placed in a random pattern. In addition, the Board encouraged the applicant to look at more than just windows in creating varied building façades. Members suggested using massing and void spaces, offsets between materials, and areas of smaller modulation. The Board also agreed with the public comments to using interesting shapes and bright colors. **(DC2-I-I, DC2-I-ii)**

The Board suggested that as this site is one of the first that will be built to this height, it is going to be visually prominent and seen from all sides for a long time. As such, great care should be given to the design and activation of each building façade. **(CS2-D-1, PL2-I-i)**

4. **Streetscape:** The Board agreed with the public's comments, suggested that the applicant work with SDOT to determine the extent of any capital improvements along 30th Ave NE. The Board also said that they would like to see a thoughtful design approach along the street frontage that will add to the street level activation and the types of activities the development might encourage. Board members also suggested that if the building uses overhead weather protection then it would be difficult to have landscaping along the building edge. In other locations, low plantings would be appropriate. **(DC2-I, DC2-I-ii)**
 - a. As the Board was concerned with safety and security, members requested additional information about the stairwells, access to the street, and the location of emergency egress. **(PL2-I-i)**
 - b. The Board asked for further clarification of the relationship of the Seattle City Light easement is with the project and if there are any potential impacts to the development. **(CS2-D-2, CS2-D-3)**
 - c. The Board stated that they would like to know if there would be any streetscape improvements that might have an effect on the required Seattle City Light easement, especially in terms of improved sidewalks adjacent to this site that would terminate at the adjacent 90 degree parking immediately south of the site, where there are no curbs or sidewalks. **(CS2-D-2, DC2-I)**
5. **Solid waste:** The Board directed the applicant to coordinate the placement of the solid waste with the adjacent buildings. Board members were concerned that the dumpsters from the adjacent property to the south could have an impact on the main entry of the project proposal. **(CS2-D-2, CS2-D-5)**
6. **Adjacent Sites:** The Board requested that the applicant provide a window overlay study to determine and mitigate any privacy impacts to adjacent buildings. **(CS2-D-2, CS2-D-5)**

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, no departures were identified.

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 [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-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. Note that existing buildings may or may not reflect the density allowed by zoning or anticipated by applicable policies.

CS2-D-2. Existing Street Features: Use changes in topography, site shape, and vegetation or structures to help make a successful fit with adjacent properties; for example siting the greatest mass of the building on the lower part of the site or using an existing stand of trees to buffer building height from a smaller neighboring building.

CS2-D-3. Zone Transitions: For projects located at the edge of different zones, provide an appropriate transition or complement to the adjacent zone(s). Projects should create a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zone and the proposed development.

Factors to consider:

- a. Distance to the edge of a less (or more) intensive zone;
- b. Differences in development standards between abutting zones;
- c. The type of separation from adjacent properties (e.g. separation by property line only, by an alley or street or open space, or by physical features such as grade change);
- d. Adjacencies to different neighborhoods or districts; adjacencies to parks, open spaces, significant buildings or view corridors; and
- e. Shading to or from neighboring properties.

CS2-D-4. Massing Choices: Strive for a successful transition between zones where a project abuts a less intense zone. In some areas, the best approach may be to lower the building height, break up the mass of the building, and/or match the scale of adjacent properties in building detailing. It may be appropriate in other areas to differ from the scale of adjacent buildings but preserve natural systems or existing features, enable better solar exposure or site orientation, and/or make for interesting urban form.

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-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: 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.

North District/Lake City 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-i. Amenities could also be placed within small and larger setbacks along commercial streets. Curb extensions and any amenity feature proposed within the public right-of-way should be explored with SDOT (Seattle Department of Transportation) very early in the design process. Examples of amenities include

PL2-I-i. Civic Core:

- a. New developments should augment Civic Core plazas and spaces by orienting their entrances to the public open spaces and by providing additional small open spaces or gathering spaces.
- b. Create strong aesthetic, visual and pedestrian connections between public space and neighboring development. Mid-block passages and dedicated easements are seen as ways to provide safe, pleasant and convenient alternatives to walking along Lake City Way.
- c. Incorporate civic art. Public spaces, private development projects, and infrastructure improvements are all encouraged to include a civic art components:
 - Use public art to identify areas with a unique identity or celebrate the entrance to a public place.
 - Make public art accessible to the public. Site public art to draw people through public spaces, but do not impede pedestrian flows.
 - Support the use of diverse media and art forms.
 - Encourage works of public art that celebrate local history and culture.
- d. Pedestrian-friendly building entrances should face all commercial streets in the Civic Core.
- e. Mini-Park (Intersection of Lake City Way NE & NE 125th Street). Walls adjacent to the Lake City mini-park (see map page vii) should have entrances to the park

- and new developments should face the park and include windows on the wall facing the park to increase visibility to the park. Other visual connections to the park through design, building form, landscaping and public art are encouraged.
- f. East-West pedestrian pass-through arcades should be considered for blocks along Lake City Way from Northeast 127th Street

DESIGN CONCEPT

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

DC1-A ARRANGEMENT OF INTERIOR USES

DC1-A-1 Visibility: Locate uses and services frequently used by the public in visible or prominent areas, such as at entries or along the street front.

DC1-A-2 Gathering Places: Maximize the use of any interior or exterior gathering spaces by considering the following:

- a. a location at the crossroads of high levels of pedestrian traffic;
- b. proximity to nearby or project-related shops and services; and
- c. amenities that complement the building design and offer safety and security when used outside normal business hours.

DC1-A-3 Flexibility: Build in flexibility so the building can adapt over time to evolving needs, such as the ability to change residential space to commercial space as needed.

DC1-A-4 Views and Connections: Locate interior uses and activities to take advantage of views and physical connections to exterior spaces and uses, particularly activities along sidewalks, parks or other public spaces.

North District/Lake City Supplemental Guidance:

DC2. Respect for Adjacent Streets: Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.

DC2-I. HUB URBAN VILLAGE

Pay special attention to projects on the zone edges in the Hub Urban Village, such as between Northeast 125th and 130th Streets and on the eastern boundary of the urban village for example. Incorporate vegetation to buffer and provide significant visual screening where privacy for adjacent sites is an important concern.

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

DC3-A OPEN SPACE USES AND ACTIVITIES

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.

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-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-B-2. Coordination with Project Design: Develop a signage plan within the context of architectural and open space concepts, and coordinate the details with façade design, lighting, and other project features to complement the project as a whole, in addition to the surrounding context.

North District/Lake City Supplemental Guidance:

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

DC2-I. EXTERIOR FINISH MATERIALS

DC2-I-i Entire Planning Area:

Design signs that are appropriate for the pedestrian scale and character that is envisioned for the area. Signs should be oriented and scaled for both pedestrians on sidewalks and persons in vehicles on streets within the immediate neighborhood.

Signage should be designed to:

- a. integrate with the architectural concept of the development in scale, detailing, use of color and materials, and placement;
- b. reflect the pedestrian scale of the neighborhood;
- c. add interest to the street level environment; and
- d. reduce visual clutter.

DC2-I-ii Hub Urban Village:

- a. Consider each building as a high-quality, long-term addition to the Lake City neighborhood; exterior design and building materials should exhibit permanence and quality appropriate to an urban setting. A well-built structure contributes to a high-quality built environment.
- b. Employ especially durable and high-quality materials at the street level, minimize maintenance concerns, and extend the life of the building. Examples of appropriate building materials for use at the street level include: brick, stone, terra-cotta or tile, and transparent glass. These materials should be applied at a scale appropriate for pedestrian use.
- c. Use materials, colors and details to unify a building’s appearance; buildings and structures should be built of compatible materials on all sides.
- d. Consider limiting the number of materials and colors used on the exterior of an individual building so that there is visual simplicity and harmony. If intense color is used it should only be used as an accent in a carefully executed and balanced color scheme. Buildings sided primarily in metal are discouraged.

- e. Design architectural features that are an integral part of the building. Avoid ornamentation and features that appear “tacked-on” or artificially thin.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application.