City of Seattle

Department of Construction and Inspections

Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN REVIEW

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number:	3028950
Address:	4727 12th Ave NE
Applicant:	Jacob Young, Citizen Design
Date of Meeting:	Monday, March 12, 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: Seattle Mixed – University District with height limit of 75-240 (M1) [SM-U 75-240 (M1)]

Nearby Zones: North – SM-U 75-240 (M1)
South – SM-U 75-240 (M1)
East – SM-U 75-240 (M1)
West -- SM-U 75-240 (M1)

Overlay Districts:
University Community Urban Center Village
University Station Area Overlay District
Frequent Transit
(No minimum parking required)

Project Area: 4,500 square feet (sq. ft.)

Current Development:
The proposal site is a mid-block parcel located on the east side of 12th Avenue NE between NE 50th St. to the north and NE 47th St. to the south. The site is currently occupied by a wood-framed single-family residential structure built in 1907, currently used as a triplex, a gravel parking area accessed from alley at the rear or west side of the residence and two large Big Leaf Maple trees approximately 30 inches in diameter.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:
The proposal site is located in the western portion of the University District neighborhood, within the smaller confines of the University Station Area Overlay District and the University Community Urban Center Village. The site is located midblock on 12th Ave NE which is a designated bike route, between NE 52nd St and NE 50th St.

The property located immediately to the north of the proposal site consists of a wood frame motel built in 1961 designed with three floors of units over a parking garage. To the south is a recently constructed 6-story residential building.

Other nearby development includes: early 20th century single-family residences; older residential structures converted for commercial use; contemporary 4-6 story residential mixed-use buildings, an 11-story reinforced concrete apartment building built in 1971, and 1-2 story commercial buildings. . Located to the north of the apartment building is surface parking with two more contemporary multi-story apartment buildings located to the north with a single story commercial building located further to the north at the corner of 12th Ave NE and NE 50th St.

This stretch of 12th Ave NE is residential in character with an abundance of street trees and other landscaping between the sidewalk and the street curb. The remaining single –family residence have traditional bermed front yards, and front yard setbacks consistent with single family residential development north of NE 50th St.

Access:
Vehicular access to the site is via 12th Ave NE, with a rolled curb and driveway adjacent to the southern property line.

Environmentally Critical Areas:
The site is not located in an Environmentally Critical Area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
This is a proposal to construct a seven-story apartment building with 67 small efficiency dwelling units. No parking is proposed. Existing structure to be demolished.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE March 12, 2018

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3028950) 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 SDCI:

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 trash could be moved to the opposite side of the building.
- Expressed concern that the 'sunken' walkways located along the north and south of the building designed as emergency egress for basement units will become throughways and loitering spaces for transients as they are connected directly to the alley. As such, the commenter requested that gates be installed to discourage any unauthorized use of those walkway spaces.
- The owner of the hotel was concerned about view impacts into their units and asked if floor level heights of the proposed structure would be the same as the motel.
- Concerned that the building of 64 residential units without parking would be an impact and suggested that a building manager would even have a car – thus needing a place to park.

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, bicycle storage standards, and other zoning compliance issues 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 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/

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.

1. **Massing Options:** While the Board supported the preferred alternative, Option A, they questioned why the elevator tower was placed in the same location for all three massing options. The Board asked if the applicant had considered a massing that included residential units that face the street and placing the elevator tower in an alternative location. The Board asked if this design approach set a precedent for the future in the context of an evolving neighborhood. The Board did not request additional design options which featured the placement of the elevator in different location. **(CS3-A, DC1-A, DC2-E)**

2. **Architectural Concept:** The Board recognized the applicant's attempt in creating a unique design concept with the use of bold angles and differing façade depths. The Board enjoyed the images located at the rear of the packet depicting the inspirational imagery for this innovative design approach. The Board also appreciated the two-story expression of the singular column which helped emphasize the design proposal's uniqueness. However, the Board noted that there might be too many different concepts being brought together in one design, and suggested emphasizing just one concept. Other suggestions included making the design more unique and creative by bringing more differentiation and changes to the building form and making the column more massive, or reducing or eliminating the use of color all together. While the Board liked the same column form duplicated at the roof deck, they suggested that covered roof deck may not be allowed per building code requirements. If that is the case, the same column form could be maintained by simply creating an un-covered vertical framed element using the same design language.
   - **a.** The Board approved of the overall design as a unique concept and supported the creative direction the project has taken to date. Further develop the design with more rhythm and composition, and demonstrate a design justification for the parti being represented in the architectural forms. **(DC2-B, DC2-E. DC3-A, DC4-A, DC3-I)**
   - **b.** The Board was concerned with the amount of blank façade facing the street especially at the upper levels and two floor height at the street. The Board observed that the precedent images gave some idea of the possible use of wood slats and lighting but did not give specific direction, other than noting that there are a multitude of ways to address blank walls. **(DC4-A, DC4-I)**
   - **c.** The Board asked for additional details how the expression of the building fabric will be expressed in relationship to the location of the elevator/ public space and lobby as seen from the street. **(DC1-A, DC4-A, DC4-I)**

3. **Trash**: The Board noted that while the proposed trash would be located immediately adjacent to the north property line and the motel to the north, it would be located next to a 14 foot vertical retaining wall and not in close proximity of unit windows. The Board didn't support the alternative of placing the trash along the southern property line, which would have more of a visual impact. However, the Board noted that the trash placement

would have impacts at either side of the property, and suggested that the trash could be placed to the interior of the building.

a. The Board directed the applicant to create an enclosed trash room in the footprint where the trash is currently indicated on page 29 of the EDG packet. The Board was also ok with either relocating the trash room to the area of the mechanical room, or placing it in a more centralized location, making it easier to install a trash chute. **(CS2-II).**

4. **Respect for Adjacent Sites:** The Board observed that the design proposal did not respond to the location of the elevator corridor of the adjacent building to the south. The Board noted that the units on the south facing façade might be too close to the adjacent building's elevator corridor. The Board suggested further review of the floor layout and possibly setting the proposed development back from the adjacent building elevator core. The Board also agreed with the public comment that the 'sunken' walkways located along the north and south of the building could be used as throughways and loitering spaces, as they have direct access to the alley. Board members discussed how the sunken walkway spaces could possibly be broken up with a combination of hardscapes, landscape, or terraced landscaping instead of stairs, but declined to make this a specific directive.

   a. Install gates to discourage any unauthorized use of the sunken walkway spaces. **(PL2-B, CS2-II)**

5. **Sidewalk and Right of Way Improvements:** The Board agreed with SDOT's recommendations and strongly encouraged the installation of a 6' planting strip on the frontage of the site and to upgrade the existing sidewalk to the minimum standard width of 6' as 12th Ave NE is a designated neighborhood greenway. **(CS3-A)**

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

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

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

University Supplemental Guidance:

CS2-I Responding to Site Characteristics

Context

The pedestrian-oriented street streetscape is perhaps the most important characteristic to be emphasized in the neighborhood. The University Community identified certain streets as "Mixed Use Corridors". These are streets where commercial and residential

uses and activities interface and create a lively, attractive, and safe pedestrian environment. The Mixed Use Corridors are shown on Map 1 (page 3).

Another important site feature in the University Community is the presence of the Burke Gilman Trail. The primary goal is to minimize impacts to views, sunlight and mixed uses while increasing safety and access along the trail.

Guideline

For properties facing the Burke Gilman Trail, new buildings should be located to minimize impacts to views of Mount Rainier, Cascade Mountains and Lake Washington, and allow for sunlight along the trail and increase safety and access.

CS2-II Respect for Adjacent Sites

Context

This Seattle Design Guideline is particularly important where a building's back side, service areas or parking lots could impact adjacent residential uses. Map 2 on page 4 shows potential impact areas—these are where Lowrise zones abut commercial zones.

Guideline

Special attention should be paid to projects in the zone edge areas as depicted in Map 2 on page 4 to ensure impacts to Low-rise zones are minimize

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.

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-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.

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;

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.

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 through the placement and detailing of all elements, including bays, fenestration, and materials, and any patterns created by their arrangement. On sites that abut an alley, design the alley façade and its connection to the street carefully. At a minimum, consider wrapping the treatment of the street-facing façade around the alley corner of the building.

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. These may include:

a. newsstands, ticket booths and flower shops (even if small or narrow);
b. green walls, landscaped areas or raised planters;
c. wall setbacks or other indentations;
d. display windows; trellises or other secondary elements;
e. art as appropriate to area zoning and uses; and/or

f. terraces and landscaping where retaining walls above eye level are unavoidable.

DC2-E FORM AND FUNCTION

DC2-E-1. Legibility and Flexibility: Strive for a balance between building legibility and flexibility. Design buildings such that their primary functions and uses can be readily determined from the exterior, making the building easy to access and understand. At the same time, design flexibility into the building so that it may remain useful over time even as specific programmatic needs evolve.

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

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.

University Supplemental Guidance:

DC4-I Exterior Finish Materials

DC4-I-i. Desired Materials: See full Guidelines for list of desired materials.

DC4-I-iii. Discouraged Materials: See full Guidelines for list of discouraged materials.

DC4-I-iv. Anodized Metal: Where anodized metal is used for window and door trim, then care should be given to the proportion and breakup of glazing to reinforce the building concept and proportions.

DC4-I-v. Fencing: Fencing adjacent to the sidewalk should be sited and designed in an attractive and pedestrian oriented manner.

DC4-I-vii. Light Standards: Light standards should be compatible with other site design and building elements.

BOARD DIRECTION

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