



**DESIGN GUIDANCE  
STREAMLINED DESIGN REVIEW**

Project Number: 3029801

Address: 2813 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue West

Applicant: Curtis Bigelow, Scale Design

Date of Report: Thursday, February 15, 2018

SDCI Staff: Allison Whitworth

**SITE & VICINITY**

Site Zone: Multifamily Lowrise 1 (LR1)

Nearby Zones: (North) LR1  
(South) LR1  
(East) LR1  
(West) SF 5000

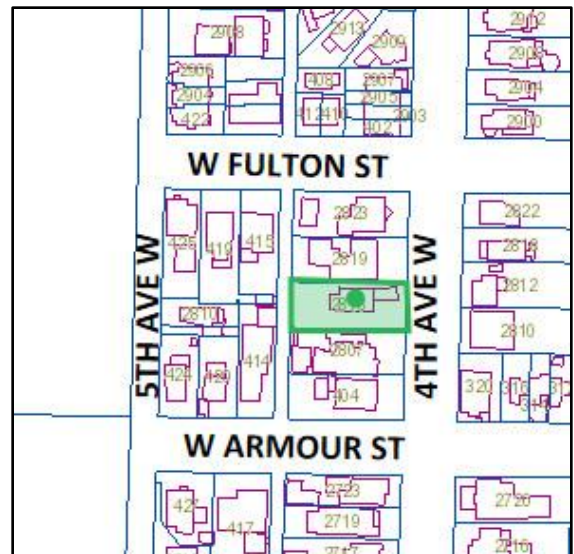
Lot Area: 2,958 square feet  
(pending approval of LBA  
#3029682)

**Current Development:**

The project site is proposed as Parcel A of the pending Lot Boundary Adjustment (LBA) application #3029682. A single family home constructed in 1912 currently occupies the site. An Exceptional tulip tree is located in the west half of the proposed Parcel A, with the canopy covering much of the development site. The site slopes down from west to east, with an overall grade change of approximately 14'.

**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

The project site is located in the Queen Anne neighborhood on the northern slope of Queen Anne Hill. Surrounding development largely includes older, traditional one- and two-story single family homes with some modern townhomes. Mount Pleasant Cemetery is located ½ a block to the west and David Rogers Park is located one block east.



**Access:**

Vehicular access to the site is provided by the alley to the west. Pedestrian access is proposed to be provided by a pedestrian access easement over Parcel B of pending LBA #3029682 from the adjacent sidewalk along 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue West.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:**

No environmentally critical areas are present on the project site as proposed under pending LBA #3029682.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Streamlined Design Review for one three-story, two-unit townhouse. Surface parking for five vehicles to be provided. Review includes removal of an exceptional tree. Existing single family residence to be demolished.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following public comments were received:

- Expressed concern regarding compliance with development standards including height, density and FAR.
- Expressed concern that too much parking is provided.
- Expressed concern regarding the size of the parking stalls and adequacy of maneuvering room.
- Many stated support for retention of the Exceptional tulip tree.
- Expressed concern regarding impacts to the stability of the steep slope on the proposed lot to the east.
- Expressed concern regarding noise, traffic, parking, overcrowding and construction impacts.
- Expressed concern regarding design compatibility with the single family neighborhood.
- Opposed to granting adjustment requests to reduce side setbacks.
- Expressed concern regarding shadow impacts.
- Opposed to increased density in the neighborhood.
- Expressed concern that adequate parking is not provided.

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/>

The purpose of the streamlined design review process is for SDCl 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. Concerns with compliance with development standards including height, density, FAR and parking are addressed under the City's zoning code and are not part of this

review. Concerns regarding construction impacts, noise, traffic impacts, parking impacts and development of the steep slope on the adjacent lot are not part of this review.

## **PRIORITIES & SDCI STAFF 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 & Design Concept:**

- a. The design concept is informed by the topography of the site and steps the massing up the slope, which staff supports. (CS1-C Topography)
- b. The massing incorporates gable roof forms which reference the traditional architectural character of the surrounding neighborhood. Staff supports the gable roof forms with the exception of the gable roof of the stair penthouse which accentuates the height and bulk of the structure. Reduce the perceived height and mass by providing a flat roof on the stair penthouse. (DC2-A-2 Reducing Perceived Mass, CS2-D-4 Massing Choices, CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes)
- c. Staff supports the proposed modulation and bay windows which add depth and visual interest to the façade, reduce the perceived mass and reference the architectural character of the surrounding neighborhood. (CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes, DC2-A-2 Reducing Perceived Mass, DC2-B Façade Composition, DC2-C Secondary Architectural Features).
- d. Entries should be obvious and identifiable. Maintain the ensemble of design elements including overhead weather protection, lighting, landscaping and stoops which differentiate the entries. (PL3-A Entries)
- e. The design and site plan should minimize privacy impacts to adjacent structures. Provide a window overlay diagram demonstrating minimal window overlap with the adjacent structures. (CS2-D5 Respect for Adjacent Sites, DC2-B-1 Façade Composition)

### **2. Site Planning & Landscape Concept:**

- a. The Design Guidelines recommend the retention of significant on-site landscaping, such as Exceptional trees. Staff strongly supports retention of the Exceptional tulip tree. However, if removal of the Exceptional tree is approved under SMC 25.11.070, staff strongly recommends providing significant replacement tree canopy on site, beyond the minimum tree replacement requirements in SMC 25.11.090. Consider a large-caliper sculptural specimen tree in the courtyard area to further define the space. (CS1-D Plants and Habitat, DC4-D-1 Choice of Plant Materials, DC4-D-4 Place Making)
- b. Staff supports the proposed courtyard adjacent to the main entries which provides opportunities for social interaction. Maintain the alternate paving pattern in this location and consider how the design can further foster active use of the courtyard, such as providing low seat walls at the planting beds. Ensure the area devoted to

- parking and vehicle maneuvering at the rear of the site does not exceed minimum code requirements, and maximize the size of the courtyard. (DC3-B-1 Meeting User Needs, DC3-B-4 Multifamily Open Space, DC3-C-2 Amenities and Features)
- c. Staff supports the proposed landscape buffer along the north property line which minimizes impacts to the neighbor. In the building permit set provide a landscape plan which identifies specific plantings. (CS2-D-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites, DC4-1 Choice of Plant Materials)
  - d. The site plan indicates separation of the parking area from the rear entries by a low wall and landscaping, which staff supports. In the building permit plans provide additional information clarifying this transition. (PL3-A Entries, PL3-B Residential Edges)

### 3. Materials

- a. Staff supports the proposed material palette including painted shingle siding, board and batten siding, black vinyl windows and black downspouts. These materials are compatible with the traditional architectural character of the surrounding neighborhood. In addition, the finer-grain texture of the materials provides depth and visual interest to the façade. Maintain the black accents which provide contrast with the white façade. (DC2-D-2 Texture, C23-A-1 Fitting Old and New Together, DC4-A Building Materials)

### 4. Wayfinding:

- a. The proposed lighting fixtures and locations aid with wayfinding and provide a sense of security to walkways, open space, and entries and should be maintained. Ensure lighting is shielded and directed away from adjacent development. (PL2-B-2 Lighting for Safety, DC4-C Lighting)
- b. Maintain the proposed address signage provided at the street for those units without direct access. (DC4-B Signage)

## DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

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

### CONTEXT & SITE

**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-1. Sun and Wind:** Take advantage of solar exposure and natural ventilation. Use local wind patterns and solar gain to reduce the need for mechanical ventilation and heating where possible.

**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-C Topography**

**CS1-C-1. Land Form:** Use natural topography and desirable landforms to inform project design.

**CS1-C-2. Elevation Changes:** Use the existing site topography when locating structures and open spaces on the 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.

**CS1-D-2. Off-Site Features:** Provide opportunities through design to connect to off-site habitats such as riparian corridors or existing urban forest corridors. Promote continuous habitat, where possible, and increase interconnected corridors of urban forest and habitat where possible.

**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-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces**

**CS2-B-1. Site Characteristics:** Allow characteristics of sites to inform the design, especially where the street grid and topography create unusually shaped lots that can add distinction to the building massing.

**CS2-B-3. Character of Open Space:** Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces.

**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-2. Existing Site Features:** Use changes in topography, site shape, and vegetation or structures to help make a successful fit with adjacent properties.

**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.

**CS2-D-4. Massing Choices:** Strive for a successful transition between zones where a project abuts a less intense zone.

**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.

**PUBLIC LIFE**

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

**PL1-B Walkways and Connections**

**PL1-B-1. Pedestrian Infrastructure:** Connect on-site pedestrian walkways with existing public and private pedestrian infrastructure, thereby supporting pedestrian connections within and outside the project.

**PL1-B-2. Pedestrian Volumes:** Provide ample space for pedestrian flow and circulation, particularly in areas where there is already heavy pedestrian traffic or where the project is expected to add or attract pedestrians to the area.

**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.

**PL1-C Outdoor Uses and Activities**

**PL1-C-1. Selecting Activity Areas:** Concentrate activity areas in places with sunny exposure, views across spaces, and in direct line with pedestrian routes.

**PL1-C-2. Informal Community Uses:** In addition to places for walking and sitting, consider including space for informal community use such as performances, farmer's markets, kiosks and community bulletin boards, cafes, or street vending.

**PL1-C-3. Year-Round Activity:** Where possible, include features in open spaces for activities beyond daylight hours and throughout the seasons of the year, especially in neighborhood centers where active open space will contribute vibrancy, economic health, and public safety.

**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.

**PL2-D Wayfinding**

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

**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-3. Individual Entries:** Ground-related housing should be scaled and detailed appropriately to provide for a more intimate type of entry.

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

**DESIGN CONCEPT**

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

**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.

**DC1-C-3. Multiple Uses:** Design parking areas to serve multiple uses such as children's play space, outdoor gathering areas, sports courts, woonerf, or common space in multifamily projects.

**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-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.

**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.

#### **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-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-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-B-2. Matching Uses to Conditions:** Respond to changing environmental conditions such as seasonal and daily light and weather shifts through open space design and/or programming of open space activities.



**DC3-B-3. Connections to Other Open Space:** Site and design project-related open spaces to connect with, or enhance, the uses and activities of other nearby public open space where appropriate.

**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-1. Reinforce Existing Open Space:** Where a strong open space concept exists in the neighborhood, reinforce existing character and patterns of street tree planting, buffers or treatment of topographic changes. Where no strong patterns exist, initiate a strong open space concept that other projects can build upon in the future.

**DC3-C-2. Amenities/Features:** Create attractive outdoor spaces suited to the uses envisioned for the project.

**DC3-C-3. Support Natural Areas:** Create an open space design that retains and enhances onsite natural areas and connects to natural areas that may exist off-site and may provide habitat for wildlife.

### **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-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.

#### **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-C-2. Avoiding Glare:** Design project lighting based upon the uses on and off site, taking care to provide illumination to serve building needs while avoiding off-site night glare and light pollution.

#### **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-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-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.

## 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 adjustment was requested:

1. **Side Setback (SMC 23.45.518 Table A):** The Code requires a 5' minimum setback from side lot lines. The applicant proposes a 3.5' setback from the north and south side lot lines, a 30% reduction of the required setback.

SDCI staff does not support the request to reduce the north side setback, as the projecting bay is adjacent to the neighboring structure to the north. However, staff supports a projecting bay on the façade, as it responds to the architectural character of the surrounding neighborhood and provides visual interest. As described below, staff is inclined to support the maximum adjustment allowed to the south side setback to accommodate modulation on the north façade which meets the required setback.

SDCI staff indicated approval to reduce the south side setback, as the projecting bay window emulates existing neighborhood patterns, provides visual interest and reduces the perceived bulk of the façade. Staff is inclined to grant an adjustment up to the allowed 50% reduction to allow flexibility in incorporating projecting bays on the north façade which meet the required setback. The resulting design better meets the intent of Design Guidelines CS3-A-1 Fitting Old and New Together, DC2-C-1 Visual Depth and Interest and DC2-A-2 Reducing Perceived Mass.

## STAFF DIRECTION

**At the conclusion of the Design Guidance, the 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. This response should be submitted both as a separate document and included in the plans.
4. All requested adjustments must be clearly documented in the building permit plans.