



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

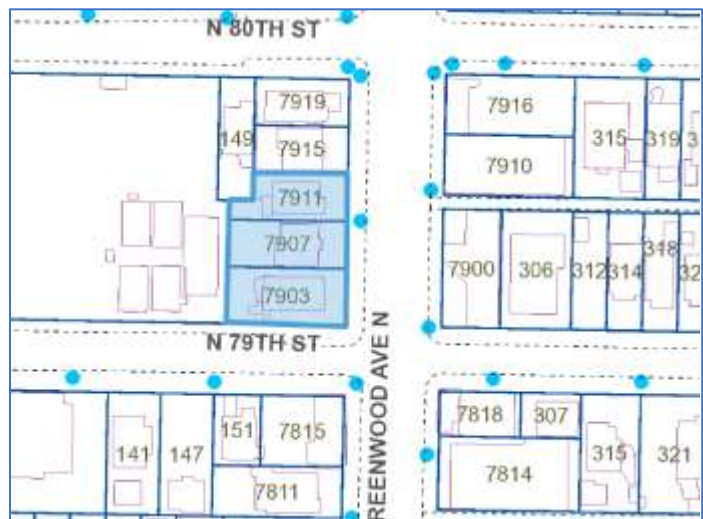
Record Number: 3033073-EG
Address: 7903 Greenwood Avenue North
Applicant: Skidmore Janette APD
Date of Meeting: Monday, July 29, 2019
Board Members Present: Emily McNichols (chair), Andy Campbell, Garrett Neli, Phoebe Bogert
Board Members Absent: Lauren Rock
SDCI Staff Present: David Landry, Senior Land Use Planner, substituting for Carly Guillory

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial 2 – 55-foot height limit (NC2-55(M))

Nearby Zones: (North) NC2-55(M), (South) NC2-55(M), (East) NC2-55(M), (West) Single Family, 5,000-square foot minimum lot size (SF5000)

Lot Area: 12,316-square feet



Current Development:

The site currently contains three residential structures with two driveway curb cuts on Greenwood Ave N and one on N 79th St.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

Surrounding development includes a variety of uses including residential, institutional, recreational, and commercial. Examples include Greenwood Elementary, St. John Catholic Church, Seattle Public Library, and Alice Ball Park. The structures along Greenwood Ave N exhibit an assortment of materials, scales, and colors including two- to three-story volumes, a strong street edge, bays, pilasters and plane changes.

Access:

Vehicular access to the site is proposed via N 79th St.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

No mapped ECAs.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Design Review Early Design Guidance for a 5-story, 81-unit apartment building with retail. Parking for 8 vehicles proposed. Existing buildings to be demolished.

The design packet includes information presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the record number at this website:

<http://www.seattle.gov/DPD/aboutus/news/events/DesignReview/SearchPastReviews/default.aspx>

Any recording of the Board meeting is available in the project file. This meeting report summarizes the meeting and is not a meeting transcript.

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

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE July 29, 2019**PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following public comments were offered at this meeting:

- Concerned about shadow impacts, particularly to the elementary school to the west.
- Recommended including townhouses.
- Questioned views from upper floors.

- Concerned about privacy impacts, particularly to the elementary school to the west.
- Recommended locating the driveway elsewhere.

SDCI staff also summarized design related comments received in writing prior to the meeting:

- Described the proposal as reasonable and perfectly suitable for the neighborhood.
- Noted the site's proximity to two elementary schools.
- Supported the proposal.
- Encouraged a design to promote walkability, safety, and cycling.
- Concerned about location of driveway and impacts to pedestrian and vehicular safety.
- Supported the proposal.

The Seattle Department of Transportation provided the following early guidance:

- Solid waste collection and vehicle access should occur from N 79th St.
- Existing street trees shall be protected and preserved.

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 Seattle Design Guidelines 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. Compliance with building height calculations or bicycle storage standards, for example, are addressed under the City's zoning code 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 record 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.

- a. The Board discussed the merits of the three massing options, supporting elements of Option B and C. Ultimately, the Board recommended further development of the preferred option, C, with the introduction of particular qualities of Option B.
- b. Those qualities of Option B the Board supported included: the strong two-story base expression and implied commercial storefront rhythm of the base. The Board agreed that the strong base with consistent rhythm at the street was an appropriate response to the existing neighborhood context. The Board recommended the project include this two-story base expression with bay rhythm. Careful integration of the townhouse entries will be important to the success of the rhythm. (*CS3-II Compatibility, PL2-A Entries*)

- c. The qualities of Option C most supported by the Board included the upper level setbacks and corner plaza at the ground level. The Board agreed the upper level setbacks provided an appropriate transition to the single-family zoning and existing school to the west and mitigated any possible blank wall conditions, and the corner plaza would offer a useable space for the neighborhood and provide opportunities to foster human interaction (*CS2-D Height, Bulk, and Scale, PL1-A-2 Adding to Public Life, DC1-I Blank Walls*).
- d. Option C included a vertical notch extending from the top down to the ground. The Board expressed concern that this notch implied a primary residential entry and diminished the strength of a two-story base. To maintain the strength of the two-story base expression, the Board recommended eliminating the vertical notch from the base. (*CS3-II Compatibility*)

2. Ground Level: Vehicular-Pedestrian Interaction

- a. Public comment described a high level of pedestrian traffic, particularly children, from Greenwood Ave N past this site to the adjacent school. With the garage entry proposed on N 79th Street, concern with vehicular-pedestrian conflicts was expressed.
- b. The Board acknowledged this public concern and agreed the garage entry should be designed with safety in mind (*PL1-B Walkways and Connections, PL2-B Safety and Security, DC1-B Vehicular Access and Circulation*).
- c. The Board suggested techniques that could be used to mitigate conflicts such as eroding the mass or utilizing the 20-foot ground level setback for increased driver visibility (*PL2-B Safety and Security, DC1-B Vehicular Access and Circulation*).
- d. The Board requested studies demonstrating this garage entry sequence, including sight triangles and driver sight lines (*PL2-B Safety and Security, DC1-B Vehicular Access and Circulation*).

3. Landscape and Materiality.

- a. Privacy to the school abutting to the west was identified as a concern in public comment.
- b. The Board acknowledged this concern and agreed the massing provided an appropriate transition and that materiality, secondary architectural features, and landscape design could further mitigate these concerns (*CS2-D Height, Bulk, and Scale, CS2-D-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites*).
- c. For instance, the Board noted that the required 20-foot ground level setback along the west property line could be densely landscaped to provide privacy (*CS2-D-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites*).
- d. Window location and any deck materiality should consider privacy to the adjacent school (*CS2-D-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites*).
- e. The Board requested studies demonstrating sight lines from unit windows to the school to the west (*CS2-D-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites*).

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 meeting, the applicant identified a request for an SDCI Type 1 decision for an exception, which that may later become a departure request if the proposal doesn't meet the exception criteria in SMC 23.47A.008.D.2. The exception will be reviewed with the MUP application.

The Board provided preliminary design review feedback, should a departure be required for this aspect of the design:

1. **Dwelling Unit Street-Level Entry Height (SMC 23.47A.008.D.2.):** The Code requires the floor of a dwelling unit located along the street-level street-facing façade to be at least four-feet above or four-feet below the sidewalk grade or be set back at least 10-feet from the sidewalk. The applicant proposes to reduce this requirement to three feet above sidewalk grade at the northeast portion of the site along Greenwood Ave N.

The Board indicated preliminary support for a potential departure request, agreeing that the request could better meet the intent of the design guidelines so long as the townhouse entries are carefully integrated into the two-story base and rhythm expression of the façade composition. (PL3 *Entries*, CS3-II *Compatibility*)

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The Seattle Design Guidelines and Neighborhood Design Guidelines recognized by the Board as Priority Guidelines are identified above. All guidelines remain applicable and 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-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-2. Connection to the Street: Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and public realm.

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

CS2-C Relationship to the Block

CS2-C-1. Corner Sites: Corner sites can serve as gateways or focal points; both require careful detailing at the first three floors due to their high visibility from two or more streets and long distances.

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-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.

Greenwood/Phinney Supplemental Guidance:

CS3-II Compatibility

CS3-II-i. Existing Pattern: Consider using the human-scale historical pattern of storefronts on Greenwood Avenue North as a guide in developing new structures abutting TownCenter streets. New development should respond to Greenwood's existing context by matching window and opening proportions, entryway patterns, scale and location of building cornices, proportion and degree of trim work and other decorative details, and employing a variety of appropriate finish materials.

PUBLIC LIFE

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

PL1-A Network of Open Spaces

PL1-A-2. Adding to Public Life: Seek opportunities to foster human interaction through an increase in the size and quality of project-related open space available for public life.

PL1-B Walkways and Connections

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.

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-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.

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-C Retail Edges

PL3-C-1. Porous Edge: Engage passersby with opportunities to interact visually with the building interior using glazing and transparency. Create multiple entries where possible and make a physical and visual connection between people on the sidewalk and retail activities in the building.

PL3-C-2. Visibility: Maximize visibility into the building interior and merchandise displays. Consider fully operational glazed wall-sized doors that can be completely opened to the street, increased height in lobbies, and/or special lighting for displays.

PL3-C-3. Ancillary Activities: Allow space for activities such as sidewalk vending, seating, and restaurant dining to occur. Consider setting structures back from the street or incorporating space in the project design into which retail uses can extend.

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.

Greenwood/Phinney Supplemental Guidance:

DC1-I Blank Walls

DC1-I-i. Storefronts: Storefronts are encouraged to be located at the sidewalk edge, particularly in neighborhood commercial districts, and should be continuous, minimizing blank walls. Where unavoidable consider treating blank walls with one or more of the methods suggested in the Seattle Design Guidelines, including:

1. installing vertical trellis in front of the wall with climbing vines or plant material;
2. employing small setbacks;
3. employing different texture, colors, or materials;
4. providing art or murals.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application.