



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor
Department of Planning and Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

CITY OF SEATTLE ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Application Number: 3006865
Applicant Name: David Foster for The Walton Group
Address of Proposal: 2415 East Denny Way

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow one, four-unit townhouse structure. Surface parking for four vehicles to be provided. The construction of townhouses has been approved under Project #6090651. Existing structure to be demolished.

The following approvals are required:

Administrative Design Review - Chapter 23.41, (SMC) including departures from development standards: open space.

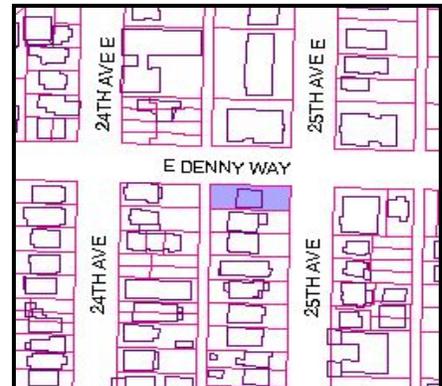
SEPA DETERMINATION: Exempt DNS MDNS EIS

DNS with conditions

DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The approximately 4,800 square foot development site is located on the corner of East Denny Way and 25th Avenue East in the Capitol Hill neighborhood. It is zoned Lowrise Two (L2) and is currently the site of single family home. For several blocks in all directions the zoning is Lowrise Two (L2).



Development in the vicinity consists of several large multifamily buildings, newer townhouse developments and older single family residences. The area is undergoing redevelopment with several projects under construction.

The site slopes steeply from west to east toward 25th Avenue East. Because of the challenges posed by the slope of the site and the proposed location of the parking the applicant has volunteered for the Administrative Design Review process to request departures from open space development standards. Administrative Design Review is conducted by DPD staff and does not involve a Design Review Board.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to remove the existing single family structure and construct four, three-story attached townhomes with surface parking for four vehicles provided at the alley entrance at grade. The design proposes townhomes facing East Denny Way that are to be terraced from the alley to 25th Avenue East. Pedestrian access to the units from the parking is proposed via a four foot common walkway at the rear (south) of the buildings. All ground level open space is proposed to be located at the front of the buildings along East Denny Way and to the east and west of the buildings.

DEPARTURES

The applicant is requesting the following Land Use Code departures: Open Space Requirements SMC 23.45.016B1c.

The required open space for townhomes in L3 zones is an average of 300 square feet per unit of private, usable open space, at ground level with no unit having less than 200 square feet. The applicant would like to add stairways from each unit to the sidewalk on East Denny Way and is requesting a reduction in the required amount usable open space per unit to allow construction of the stairways. The units would also be accessed by a four foot walkway at the rear of the site that connects the units to the parking. The rear walkway continues out to the sidewalk at 25th Avenue East.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

DPD received two written comment letters and during the EDG comment period which ended September 5, 2007. Comments concerned the amount of redevelopment in the neighborhood and the lack of parking.

PRIORITIES:

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the DPD planner provides the siting and design guidance described below and identifies by letter and number those siting and design guidelines found in the City of Seattle's "*Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings*" of highest priority to this project. All guidelines apply, however the following are of the highest priority.

The guidance by the Department appears after the bold guidelines text and the recommendations from the final recommendations follow in italicized text.

A. Site Planning

A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street:

Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street

The proposal should make entrances at East Denny Way clearly connect to the street. The proposed stairways should be designed in such a way as to encourage interaction between units and between units and the street.

A-6 Transition between Residence and Street

For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.

&

A-7 Residential Open Space

Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.

The entrances should be designed to maximize usability, as spaces for interaction, reminiscent of “stoops”. Consideration should be given to ways to lower any retaining walls between units. Landscaping the open spaces to promote eyes on the street, while still providing security and screening is of importance.

The applicant should provide a detailed color landscape plan that shows the entrances and the ground level open space.

The proposed stairway entrances from East Denny provide a direct route to the street and will act as “stoops” or traditional porches where residents may interact. Retaining walls between units are lower to allow more visibility and interaction. Though the proposed stairways bisect the open space, the open space has been redesigned to be more usable by residents. The previous sloping open space is now terraced down to the street level and the sidewalk-level retaining wall is lower and landscaped with vines.

C. Architectural Elements and Material

C-3 Human Scale:

The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve a good human scale.

The proponent should consider alternative approaches to the design of the building entrances, including introducing terracing from the building to the street in order to minimize the height of retaining walls.

The space between the building and the street is now terraced and the retaining wall is lower at the sidewalk level. Additional landscaping is introduced to soften the effect of the retaining wall.

D. Pedestrian Environment

D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances.

Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry(s) should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather.

Stairways should be clearly delineated and sufficiently lighted. The Department encourages the use of semi-pervious materials in usable open space that complement building materials and colors. The stairway, retaining wall and open space materials and design should be shown in detail. A part of the structure's success will be found in the construction details.

D-3 Retaining Walls

Retaining walls near a public sidewalk that extend higher than eye level should be avoided where possible. Where high retaining walls are unavoidable, they should be designed to reduce their impact on pedestrian comfort and to increase the visual interest along the streetscape.

Alternatives to high retaining walls should be explored including terracing and use of alternative retaining materials such as rock or blocks. Should no alternative exist, the use of low open railings or fencing (for safety) and trailing landscaping should be employed to soften the effect of the walls. Retaining walls *between* units should also be as low as possible to encourage conversation.

The new design incorporates step lights embedded into the concrete walls of the stairways. The sidewalk level retaining wall has been lowered to four feet which is below eye level and landscaping has been added to the retaining wall to soften the effect. Walls between units are lowered to encourage conversation.

E. Landscaping

E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site

Landscaping including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.

The design should include the use of street trees with large canopies on both East Denny Way and 25th Avenue East to help to soften the exposed effect of the elevated site and to provide a sense of privacy for owners. The design should also include landscaping of the usable open space at East Denny Way that encourages a connection to the street while still providing privacy and security.

Additional landscaping has been added to the site and street trees are provided along both East Denny and 25th Avenue East in the planting strips at the street.

MASTER USE PERMIT

The applicant applied for the Master Use Permit August 15, 2007.

RECOMMENDATION

Departure from Development Standards:

The applicant has requested departures from the Land Use Code development standards. They are the following:

Requested Departures Table

Standard	Request	Justification	Recommendation
SMC23.45.016A3 Open Space 300SF, average/unit, 200SF minimum, at ground level	Reduce the amount of open space to 246.5 SF average per unit to allow the construction of stairway access to the sidewalk.	Would provide direct access from each unit to the sidewalk encouraging social interaction between units and between units and neighborhood.	Staff approves the departure request, A-3, A-6, C-3, D-1, E-2
SMC23.45.016C2 Open space must be within 18" of existing grade.	Open space for Units 2, 3 and 4 are >18" above grade.	Open space will now match the floor level of the units and enable shorter stairways to the street.	Staff approves the departure request. A-7, C-3, D-1

Public Comment:

No comments were received during the MUP comment period which ended April 11, 2007.

Recommendation:

After considering the proposed design and the project context, hearing public comment, and reconsidering the previously stated design priorities, the planner feels that all of the guidance the architect received has been successfully addressed. After much scrutiny of the site, the neighborhood context, proposed architectural massing and facades, open space, and materials the Department supports the departures and recommends **approval** of the design. The issued building permit shall be revised to reflect changes in site design.

DIRECTOR'S DECISION: DESIGN REVIEW

The Director of DPD has reviewed the design and finds that it is consistent with the City of Seattle Design Review *Guidelines for Multifamily & Commercial Buildings*. The recommendations summarized above were based on the application submitted to DPD on August 15, 2007. Design, siting or architectural details not specifically identified or altered in these recommendations are expected to be reflected in all future plans submitted to DPD.

After considering the site and context, public comments, the response to the design guideline priorities and reviewing the plans, the Director approves the subject design, as well as the requested departures with conditions listed below.

CONDITIONS – Design Review

Prior to Issuance of the Revised Building Permit

1. Include the color drawings of elevations and revised landscaping plan from MUP plans as part of the revised building permit sets (1 and 2) of record.

Prior to Certificate of Occupancy

2. Compliance with the approved design features and elements, including exterior materials, finishing details, roof amenities, colors, landscaping and R.O.W. improvements, shall be verified by the DPD Planner assigned to this project. Inspection appointments with the Planner (Marti Stave 206 684-0239) must be made at least 3 working days in advance of the inspection.

During Construction

3. All changes to the exterior facades of the building and landscaping on site and in the R.O.W. must be submitted as a revision to the building permit and reviewed by a Land Use Planner prior to proceeding with any proposed changes.

Non-Appealable Conditions

4. Any proposed changes to the exterior of the building or the site or must be submitted to DPD for review and approval by the Land Use Planner (Marti Stave 206-684-0239). Any proposed changes to the improvements in the public right-of-way must be submitted to DPD and SDOT for review and for final approval by SDOT.
5. Compliance with all images and text on the MUP drawings, design review guidelines and approved design features and elements (including exterior materials, landscaping and ROW improvements) shall be verified by the DPD planner assigned to this project (Marti Stave 206-684-0239), or by the Design Review Manager. An appointment with the assigned Land Use Planner must be made at least three working days in advance of field inspection. The Land Use Planner will determine whether submission of revised plans is required to ensure that compliance has been achieved.
6. Embed all of these conditions in the cover sheet for the MUP permit and for all subsequent permits including updated MUP plans, and all building permit drawings and embed the colored MUP recommendation drawings in the building permit plan sets.
7. Add the departure matrix shown on page 5 of this document to the coversheets of the MUP and Building Permit Plans to be microfilmed.

Signature: _____ (signature on file) Date: December 6, 2007
Marti Stave, Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development