



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

**Application Number:** 3007155  
**Applicant Name:** Brittani Ard  
**Address:** 411 Summit Avenue

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Land Use Application to allow a 4-story, 4- unit townhouse structure with covered parking for four vehicles located on the site. Existing structure to be demolished.

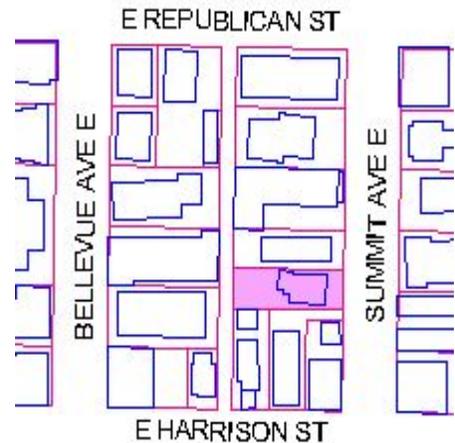
The following approvals are required:

**Administrative Design Review** - Chapter 23.41 Seattle Municipal Code (SMC). Design Departures are requested from the following four Code sections: SMC 23.45.010 (Lot Coverage), SMC 23.45.014 (Set-Backs), SMC 23.45.011 (Structure Depth), and SMC 23.45.016 (Open Space).

**PROJECT, SITE, AND VICINITY DESCRIPTIONS**

The project proposes four (4) residential units in one townhouse structure and four (4) garage parking spaces at alley grade. The applicant has sought project review through the Administrative Design Review process to request departures from the Land Use Code development standards listed above.

The project site is located on the west side of Summit Avenue East (Summit Avenue) between East Harrison and East Republican Streets. The site is approximately 4,800 square feet in area with 40 feet of frontage on both Summit Avenue and the alley to the west. The site topography is primarily flat except for an approximately six and one-half foot grade drop from east to west approximately 25 feet from the rear (alley) property boundary. The site contains a former single-family



structure, now divided into multiple dwelling units, with vehicle access from the alley. This structure will be demolished for project construction.

The zoning for the site and the immediately surrounding blocks is Mid-Rise (MR). The surrounding land uses are a mix of single-family and multi-family structures of various sizes and ages. The development site is within an eclectic mid-rise neighborhood. Most of the surrounding buildings have a traditional apartment house character with on-site street frontages that have a semi-public character for the residents, unlike typical townhouse private open space areas. The apartment street frontage areas are the setting for common entry walkways leading to the building entry. For example, see the two multi-family structures directly to the north.

### Public Comment

Application for a Master Use Permit was made August 22, 2007 and deemed complete August 30, 2007. No comment letters were received during the two-week comment period ending September 12, 2007. Public comments were received during the two week comment period following application for Early Design Guidance as follows:

- There should be a community benefit from granting departures from the requirements for open space and side set-backs,
- A concern that a four-story building will dominate this lot and reduce a sense of openness and light. The request to vary the open space and side yard standards seems to place monetary profit ahead of creating a pleasant neighborhood,
- A concern that a four-story building will block light to and views from the neighboring Summit Terrace building. Building height and open space should be appropriate to the neighborhood and not vary from the zoning standards,
- A four-story building would be in scale with the surrounding buildings, but the building footprint should not be too large for the site and should include front and side yards with landscaping.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE DESIGN REVIEW MASTER USE PERMIT**

### **Summary of MUP Proposal**

The MUP proposal continued the applicant's preferred Option 1 along with the request for four *Design Departures*. This option proposes four townhouses in one structure with two fronting on Summit Avenue (Units C and D) and two fronting the alley (Units A and B). A common entry for all units would be in the center of the structure's south façade. All units would have individual secondary entries to grade that face their respective right of way (ROW) frontages.

This option is designed to respond to the unusual site condition of a 6 to 8-foot drop in grade between the western twenty percent of the lot (fronting the alley) and the remainder of the lot extending to Summit Avenue. It proposes to place the required open space for the rear two units (Units A and B) on the garage roof (originally carport) in order to be at the same elevation as the higher portion of the lot and the first level of the proposed units. This arrangement avoids locating 50 percent of the open space in the area of elevation change, which is allowed by Code. Code requires that 100 percent of required open space be at ground level or within 18-inches of existing grade.

The applicant's preferred option requires *Design Departures* from various Code provisions. At EDG four departures were requested. Following design development an additional *Design Departure* was identified. See Design Departure matrix at the end of this document and discussion below in *Director's Analysis and Decision*.

Because the MUP response was a continuation of the EDG proposed project that elicited the EDG guidance, it did not respond to the guidance in the EDG report. After working with the applicant to clarify the importance of this guidance and ways to achieve it the applicant submitted updated design responses on December 19 and 26, 2007 and February 5, 2008 and available in the project file.

Analysis of the consequent MUP design response and any project *Conditions* follow the Early Design Guidance below, which is *Italics*.

## **ANALYSIS - DESIGN REVIEW**

### **A. Site Planning**

**A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics.** The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.

*The alley facing portion of the site is approximately 6-feet below the remaining approximately 100 feet of the 120 foot deep site. While this is appropriate for the location of parking, it restricts the use of this area for any other purpose. The proposal to integrate open space onto the carport roof should be pursued in keeping with the related design guidance below.*

MUP Analysis. See analysis of related guidelines below.

**A-2 Streetscape Compatibility.** The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.

**A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street.** Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from 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.

*The design of the site's sidewalk / street frontage and entry walkway and entry area should look at the nearby positive examples of the public-to-private front setback transition zone.*

- *The common entry should be visible and legible from the street.*
- *A generous and inviting walkway connection between the entry and the sidewalk should be provided.*
- *The entry walkway should be more than a strictly rectilinear path squeezed between and paralleling the property line and the open space for Unit D. For example, the neighboring driveway along the south property boundary already will require screening along this side*

*of the walkway; a high privacy fence along the south side of the Unit D open space would then have a doubly constraining visual affect on a narrow walkway area.*

MUP Analysis. The proposed common exterior entry foyer on the structure's south side is connected to the public sidewalk by a widened entry pathway that tapers down from the sidewalk toward the building entry. A pathway connecting to southeast Unit D from the entry path has been added. A pathway from the sidewalk directly to the northeast unit, Unit C, has been added. Soffit lighting has been added to the underside of the first to second floor overhang along the entry path and entry canopy to accentuate the entry from the street. The material of the soffit and canopy is now a bright metal panel to achieve this same effect when the lighting is not used. The revised project adequately responds to the guidance given.

**A-7 Residential Open Space. Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.**

*The carport roof proposed for the open space location for Units A and B should be constructed to be durable and allow full loads and usage that a ground related open space would allow. Quality landscaping is an essential element in creating a pleasant open space. This open space location should not be limited to the minimal "furnishings" of a deck.*

- *For the MUP submittal, details and specifics of the proposed surface materials (impervious, grass roof, etc) and above the roof surface (plants, landscaping, and fencing) must be provided.*
- *Details of the character and quality of the Summit Avenue facing open space areas should also be included with the MUP submittal. If strictly private open space areas are sought, these should not be at the expense of providing the street facing transition zone discussed above. Consideration should be given to using the design departure process for the use of some open space area as common open space to achieve the desired transition zone, or other approach to create better street frontage open space areas.*

MUP Analysis. The project proposes a turf grass lawn and plantings for the garage roof open space, typical of that for a ground level open space.

A *Design Departure* has been requested to allow most of the required private open space for Units C and D and facing the street to be common tenant open space. Both of these units would have private open space directly outside their ground level street facing (secondary) entries. Additional open space adjacent to these private areas would be for common tenant use. This revised open space proposal allows the proposed open space area between the structure and the sidewalk to function similar to the large common areas of the some of the surrounding older apartment developments.

Because of the expected benefit of converting some of the street facing private open space to common open space the applicants proposed the same for the garage roof open space. Consequently the open space *Design Departure* has been expanded to include the private open space for Units A and B. Each of these units would also have private open space directly outside their ground level alley facing (secondary) entries; these areas would be adjacent to the proposed common garage roof open space.

The Director finds that the proposed common open space would meet the guidance given by better

responding to the favorable surrounding multi-family context as described in this document.

### **C. Architectural Elements and Materials**

**C-1 Architectural Context. New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.**

*The building set-back should respond to the street-wall created by the set-backs of the existing structures immediately to the north. The buildings to the south, a carport and the related residential structure, are not a part of the positive architectural context, but their siting very close to the property line give an indication of likely future development for these small lots, and hence a continuation of the averaged street wall – front set-back appropriate for the proposed development.*

MUP Analysis. The design continues to propose a 19 foot front set-back, similar to the existing structure. The proposed project changes for the street facing open space and massing of the ground floor level (see C-2 below) results in the proposal adequately responding to the intent of this guidance.

**C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency. Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural context.**

*The surrounding architectural styles are varied, but do offer some guidance. Many structures have singularly “full block” and visually “solid” massing with little modulation and planar variation. They use masonry and have extensive glazing facing the street.*

*The preliminary design shown departs from this by having its greatest display of bulk at its middle section resulting in a weightiness over a seemingly insubstantial ground level. The proposed white banding creates and separates front, middle, and rear sections and adds to this sculptural disorientation. While the third and fourth floor level banding assists in enunciating the penthouse structure, as it becomes vertical in the building’s mid-section to express the buildings three sections, it creates a lack of relationship among the different sections and levels.*

*The further developed design should reduce the mid-section weightiness – and compressed appearance of the ground level - and, if choosing to continue with the white banding, use this to create a more unified relationship between the building sections and levels.*

MUP Analysis. The revised design proposes to extend the east and west ground level brick facades to the plane of the two floors above. The downward extension of the white roof banding through the center of the side facades has been removed and the fourth level siding material has instead been extended through this area. The remaining white banding on the facades now effectively serves to break up the largely singular mass of the structure and creates a more coherent design.

**C-4 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.

*Regardless of the architectural expression, building finish materials should create a color and textural relationship to the eclectic surrounding building material context.*

MUP Analysis. The continued proposal of brick for the ground level along with the cedar rain screen for most of the second and third level facades has reference to traditional materials in the neighborhood. These are proposed in a modern / northwest contemporary expression that meets this guidance.

#### **D. Pedestrian Environment**

**D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances.** Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry 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. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian oriented open space should be considered.

**D-7 Personal Safety and Security.** Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.

*The design proposes a stairway from the alley level carport parking to the main entrance. This stairway would be between an existing concrete block wall on the property to the south and a side wall and below the carport / open space roof, thereby having little visibility from the surrounding buildings for natural surveillance. A carport, as a structure without doors, could become a location for undesirable behavior. Both the stairway and the carport should be designed with tenant safety in mind. Consideration should be given to providing a garage instead of a carport for security and creating more usable private spaces for tenants.*

*See guidance under A-2, 3, and 6 above regarding the entry and walkway from the street.*

MUP Analysis. The project now proposes an enclosed garage. The exterior stairs will be lit and be visible from the extensively glazed interior areas of Unit A above. The project may also include an interior connection between the garage and the central elevator entry.

**D-2 Blank Walls.** Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable, they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.

*This is a high pedestrian use neighborhood. The adjacent alley is generally wide and often used for pedestrian traffic. It is also visible from multiple dwelling units that face onto it.*

*The proposed carport (or garage) will place a wall along the north property line. The north face of this wall should be visually broken into smaller units with reveal lines, or other details, to reduce its scale. Generally, any exposed walls, or doors if a garage is chosen, should have a modicum of material and design integration, even as an alley facing utility structure, to be visually pleasant to adjacent residents and passing pedestrians.*

MUP Analysis. The exposed portions of the garage north wall will be constructed of board formed concrete to add textural detail for visual interest. The previously proposed solid deck enclosure, similar to a parapet, has been replaced with open railings. The added garage doors will be of a typical multiple panel configuration but with a paint finish to match the upper level black siding.

## **E. Landscaping**

**E-1 Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites. Where possible, and where there is not another overriding concern, landscaping should reinforce the character of neighboring properties and abutting streetscape.**

*Street trees in the planting strip are required for new development, unless it is not possible to meet the SDOT (Seattle Department of Transportation) planting standards. The width of Summit Avenue ROW (60 feet) is above the required ROW width for this zone (52 feet). Although the roadway surface is not excessive, there is a minimal planting strip with a sidewalk (exact dimensions are unknown but this is based on the planner's site visit observation). However, there is additional unpaved area between the sidewalk and the property boundary. The applicant should contact Bill Ames, SDOT Forester, at 684-5693, to determine if adequate area is available for street trees.*

*Whether or not there is sufficient room in the ROW for street trees, on site tree and landscape requirements should be integrated into the street facing open space and entry areas to create a visually pleasing street frontage similar to the street facing landscaped areas of the two multi-family structures immediately to the north.*

MUP Analysis. Because of the five foot distance between the sidewalk and property line SDOT Forester Mike Schnad determined that it is possible, and hence required, to plant street trees in this area. The applicant should contact the SDOT forester (684-5693) at the time of building construction for direction on the spacing and species of tree. The construction application site plan should include his phone number and the requirement to contact the forester.

**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.**

*This guideline pertains to the site's street face as well as the proposed carport roof top open space. A variety of landscaping, both soft-scape and hard-scape, should be provided to lessen heat build-up on a deck like surface, provide screening for project residents and residents of adjacent properties, and add a layer of visual interest between the open space / carport edge and building face beyond.*

MUP Analysis. A variety of landscaping appropriate to both private and common open space has been included.

**SUMMARY OF DEPARTURE REQUESTS**

<i>Land Use Code Standard</i>	<i>Proposed Departure</i>	<i>Rationale for Request</i>	<i>DPD Decision</i>
<p><b>Set-Backs.</b> The average and minimum side set-back is 11-feet and 6-feet for the proposed 94.75 foot building depth (calculated on the combined attached garage and principal structure) (SMC 23.45.014).</p>	<p>No north side set-back for the proposed garage and 6-foot minimum and 7 foot maximum side set-backs for the principal structure.</p>	<p>Placing the garage at alley grade will locate its roof approximately at the existing grade of the street facing portion of the lot. This will allow for a more usable open space as well as provide covered parking for the residents. Although this minimizes the appearance of the garage and does not effectively increase the principal structure depth of 74.75 feet, their combined depth is counted toward structure depth and used to determine the set-backs. The proposed principal structure alone would require an 8 foot average and 5 foot minimum side set-back. A-7</p>	<p>The Director approves this request based on its design response as analyzed in this report.</p>
<p><b>Open Space.</b> The grade of the open space shall be either the existing grade or within 18 inches of existing grade (SMC 23.45.016).</p>	<p>Place the majority of the open space adjacent to Units A and B on the proposed garage roof.</p>	<p>To create a large, usable, and level open space area for each of the rear two units. A Code complying alternative would require a smaller building foot print but still result in up to 50 percent of this open space being sloped. A-6, A-7</p>	<p>The Director approves this request based on its design response as analyzed in this report.</p>

<b><i>Land Use Code Standard</i></b>	<b><i>Proposed Departure</i></b>	<b><i>Rationale for Request</i></b>	<b><i>DPD Decision</i></b>
<p><b>Open Space.</b> The 200 sq. ft. minimum for townhouses shall be private. (SMC 23.45.016).</p>	<p>Provide more than the required amount of open space for the project and units (15% of lot = 719 sq. ft. and 800 sq. ft. for 4 units) but have most of the ground or garage level open space for common tenant usage (620 sq. ft. common, 180 sq. ft. private).</p>	<p>Street facing common open space allows a front setback area that is more in keeping with the existing and favorable street facing common gatherings areas of the neighborhood. Common open space in the rear would further allow a location for the fostering of an “intra-development” sense of community.</p> <p>In addition to the ground level private open space, private open space (123 sq. ft. per unit) would also be provided on upper level roof decks. A-6, A-7</p>	<p>The Director approves this request based on its design response as analyzed in this report.</p>
<p><b>Structure Depth.</b> Structure depth is limited to 65 percent of lot depth. Parcel lot depth is approximately 120 feet; allowed structure depth is 78 feet. A garage of this configuration is counted toward structure depth. (SMC 23.45.011).</p>	<p>To exceed the maximum structure depth by approximately 17.75 feet. The proposed depth of the largely underground garage is approximately 21 feet and the proposed principal structure depth is approximately 74.75 feet for a total of 95.75 feet.</p>	<p>The garage structure is for the creation of a better quality of open space. This will also cover the otherwise unsightly, but allowed, parking area. The garage roof will be visually close to grade relative to the remainder of the site. It will not create visual bulk impacts that are partially the aim of the structure depth limitations.</p>	<p>The Director approves this request based on its design response as analyzed in this report.</p>

<i>Land Use Code Standard</i>	<i>Proposed Departure</i>	<i>Rationale for Request</i>	<i>DPD Decision</i>
<b>Lot Coverage.</b> Lot coverage for townhouses no higher than 37 feet are limited to 50 percent lot coverage. 2,400 square feet of lot coverage is allowed (SMC 23.45.010).	Approximately 58 percent lot coverage. The presented plans indicate an approximately 2,037 square foot townhouse structure plus an approximately 735 square foot garage for a total of 2,772 square feet.	Although the garage minimally visible above grade relative to the Summit Avenue facing portion of the lot, it is technically above grade and therefore counted toward lot coverage. A-7	The Director approves this request based on its design response as analyzed in this report.

**DIRECTOR’S ANALYSIS AND DECISION – DESIGN REVIEW**

The proposed design responses, as outlined above in this document, have responded to the design guidance given in the *Early Design Guidance* report and follow-up conversations with the project planner and are consistent with the *City of Seattle Design Review: Guidelines for Multi-Family and Commercial Buildings*. Based on the design responses shown on supplemental plan sheets received and dated December 19 and 26, 2007 and February 5, 2008 (available in the project MUP file) the Director **APPROVES** the proposed design and related departures subject to the **Conditions** found at the end of this decision.

**DESIGN REVIEW CONDITIONS**

*Non-Appealable Design Review Conditions*

1. Any proposed changes to the exterior of the building or the site must be submitted to DPD for review and approval by the Land Use Planner (Art Pederson, 733-9074).
2. The building constructed shall comply with all images and text on the final MUP drawings, as *Conditioned*, design review meeting guidelines and approved design features and elements (including exterior materials, and landscaping). This shall be verified by the DPD planner assigned to this project (Art Pederson, 733-9074), or by the Design Review Manager, before the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy. 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.

Call out all departures on relevant updated MUP plan sheets and building permit plan sheets.

Prior to Issuance of the Master Use Permit

3. Update plan sets 1 and 2 to reflect the approved design changes discussed in this decision and shown or described on the supplemental sheets dated December 19 and 26, 2007 and February 5, 2008. Also update the color elevations.

Prior to Issuance of the Building Permit

4. The design shown in the building permit plans shall conform to all images and text on the MUP drawings, design review meeting guidelines and approved design features and elements (including exterior materials and landscaping).

Prior to Issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy

5. On-site verification of conformance with the approved building and site design as shown in the building permit plans and conforming to the approved MUP design, or subsequently revised and approved by the DPD planner assigned to this project (Art Pederson, 206-733-9074), or by the Design Review Manager, shall occur before issuance of the *Certificate of Occupancy*. 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.

Appealable Design Review Conditions

None.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (signature on file) Date: March 24, 2008  
Art Pederson, Land Use Planner  
Department of Planning and Development

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