



City of Seattle

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

Project Number: 3007896
Applicant Name: Brian Runberg of Runberg Architecture Group
Address of Proposal: 5343 Tallman Avenue NW

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow two, seven-story towers above a two level below grade parking garage. Towers contain a total of 17 live-work units and 286 residential units. Parking for 240 vehicles to be provided. Project includes 28,000 cu. yds. of grading. Existing structures to be demolished.

The following approvals are required:

Design Review (No Departures) (SMC Chapter 23.41)

SEPA – Environmental Determination (SMC Chapter 25.05)

SEPA DETERMINATION: Exempt DNS MDNS EIS

DNS with conditions

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

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial (NC3-68).

Nearby Zones: (North) NC3-85
(South) MIO-65-NC3-65
(East) MIO 65 NC3-85 and MIO 105 NC3 65
(West) C1-65

Lot Area: 49,084 square feet

Current Development:

The site currently includes seven structures and surface parking. The existing buildings include residential units, office, storage, and light industrial uses.

Access:

Proposed curb cuts at Tallman Avenue NW and Russell Ave NW.



Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

Uses directly adjacent to the site include the Swedish Medical Center on Tallman Ave NW (multiple five to six story buildings) to the east as well as a single story Wells Fargo Bank. Office and retail uses in a nonregistered historic style building to the NW are directly adjacent to the site (three stories zoned NC3- 85). A building with restaurant and retail uses is across 20th/Russell (single story zoned NC3P-65) next to the mixed use development on 20th (Canal Street Station-residential six stories zoned C1-65). Across Russell Ave NW is the Louisa local landmark historic brick building with retail uses (two stories), rear entries to FOE assembly hall (two stories wood) and a single story CMU automotive shop (zoned C1-65). Directly adjacent to the southeast is the Swedish parking garage with a skybridge across Tallman Ave NW (zoned MIO-65-NC3-65).

The subject site is on the edge of the hospital Major Institution Overlay which has a medical office character, as well as being located on the edge of the strong commercial and historic character of Market Street that wraps around from the north to the west. Newer development is more varied from the traditional, older buildings of the neighborhood that tend to typically define the character.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: May 9, 2011

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Three alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options include a public access path along the north property line connecting Russell Ave with Tallman Ave.

The first scheme (Option A) showed an O-shaped configuration with an interior courtyard. Residential access would be from Russell Ave and commercial access from Tallman Ave. The north and south sides of the building would be pulled back. Live work units would be located at ground level along the north side of the building as well as along Russell Ave. Medical office use would be located at grade along Tallman Ave. This alternative would need a departure from the 80% of non-residential street frontage along 20th Avenue NW.

The second and preferred scheme (Option B) showed an O-shaped configuration with notches at the east and west facades and a more condensed courtyard space. No departures are requested with this alternative.

The third scheme (Option C) showed a double courtyard configuration with one in the center of the building and the second as three-sided and facing out to the east. No departures are requested with this alternative.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately three members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Noted that the design of the proposed development should stay in character of the neighborhood by being brick with a high quality appearance.
- Stated that the courtyard appears pinched and a shadow study would be helpful in considering how the lower units facing the courtyard would have solar access.
- Suggested the double courtyard scheme with the second, three sided courtyard facing out to the south to gain greater solar access (at least until the site to the south is developed).
- Solar access for the units and open spaces should be an important consideration.
- Questions the viability of the live/work units on the south side of the building.
- Noted that the medical office use may not need street frontage and perhaps this could be relocated?
- Suggested that modulation along the street is less critical given the wide rights-of-ways – would rather see this area given to enlarging the courtyard dimensions.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION MEETING: June 25, 2012

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The packet includes materials presented at the Recommendation meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3007896) at this website:

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp.

or contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

Address: Public Resource Center
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
Seattle, WA 98124

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

The applicant noted that approximately 35% of the site is dedicated to public open space at grade, including two public pedestrian connections across the site. The applicant clarified that the south connection adjacent to Swedish would be open 24/7, and the courtyard connection would be gated in the evenings.

The proposed design has been modified from EDG to provide all live-work units located at street level.

The design part is that of a “geode,” with a solid darker exterior and crystalline interior. The street-facing facades would be clad in dark grey fiber cement panels with Prodema paneled frames extruded at various locations. The interior of the site includes a walkway and courtyard, with a higher level of glazing and a variety of green colored fiber cement or metal panels.

The material palette is inspired by the textured metal panels found in nearby maritime uses. The cementitious panel would likely be a newer product (Natura) in a high quality finish, with exposed fasteners in the same color as the cementitious panel. Dark grey vinyl windows would allow the window frames to blend with the building exterior. Prodema with wood grain would be used on the framed portions of the exterior façade. Soffits would be natural wood.

The applicant explained how the live-work units have been designed for maximum flexibility as either live-work or fully commercial use. The floor plans include sleeping areas and restrooms on the mezzanine level, with set backs and patio areas adjacent to the sidewalk. The two-story spaces include large glazed areas facing the street.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Concerned that the drawings may not show rooftop mechanical equipment; this equipment should be consolidated with stair tower and elevator overrun and screened adequately.
- Appreciation for the large amount of landscaping and the setbacks proposed with this development, compared with nearby newer development.
- Appreciation for contemporary design, proposed materials, and garden/patios for live-work spaces.
- Appreciation for the amount of proposed public space.
- Would like to see the live-work spaces used as true commercial uses.
- Concerned that the two-story expression of the live-work units doesn’t relate well to the pedestrian scale, compared to the nearby older 1-story commercial buildings.
- The cultural context and Scandinavian modernist approach to the design is appropriate: Scandinavian inspired design, without mimicking the red brick buildings in the neighborhood.

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. The Board identified the Citywide Design Guidelines & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

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

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE

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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed at length the building massing and how it could maximize light access to the residential units. The Board agreed that the design should acknowledge and maximize solar access, including the possibility of exploring differing building heights to allow greater light into the courtyard.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the different character of the streets on the east and west sides of the project and that the design should respond appropriately to each. The east side should relate more to the medical office uses across Tallman Avenue and the west side should respond more to the commercial and retail character of Russell Avenue.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted the three types of entrances that are proposed: medical office, live/work and residential. The different types should be clearly differentiated and clearly identifiable for the intended user. The Board discussed the proposed live/work units along the south edge and recommended that the entry points to these units be secured, but distinctive.

- A-4 Human Activity. New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board stated that this site has many opportunities with regard to human activity and should harness the high volumes of pedestrian activity that already occur in close proximity to the site and endeavor to pull pedestrians to the site and further activate this block.

- 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board was particularly concerned with the transition between the live/work units and the sidewalk. The Board noted that these units should strive towards an urban form and appearance with storefront windows, but also consider including a buffer area between the units and the sidewalk for landscaping or hardscape design that creates a transition that encourages the live/work uses to open up to the sidewalk and/or express the commercial aspects of the live/work use at the sidewalk level.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board stated that they look forward to seeing greater information and details for the open spaces provided at grade and at the upper level courtyard.

A-10 Corner Lots. Building on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted the tremendous potential of the building design to respond to the terminus views presented at both Russell (and the tip of the NW corner) and the northeast corner as seen from Market Street. Special attention should be given to the design and celebration of these corners. The Russell terminus should seek to draw people down the street towards the building.

B. Height, Bulk and Scale

B-1 Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility. Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to near-by, less intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk, and scale between anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed that the most successful massing option will be the alternative that maximizes light access to the most units. Towards this end, the Board suggested exploring different massing heights or erosion of the corner units to achieve better solar access into the courtyard areas. The Board did not state a preference for one of the massing alternatives because their overriding concern was maximizing the solar access to the courtyard and designing a courtyard configuration and size that would take full advantage of light to the units and courtyard space.

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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that the two most important views of the site are the terminus view down Russell Avenue to the site and from Market Street to the site. The design should harness these views to draw people towards the site and express the unique location.

- 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed strongly encouraged a high quality material palette that responds to the dominant and character driven buildings of the neighborhood and nearby historic district. This is primarily masonry and brick.

- C-5 **Structured Parking Entrances. The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board strongly agreed that garage entrances should be minimized and the pedestrian streetscape given priority over the interruption of the pedestrian environment by the driveway. The Board also suggested that the design of the garage doors be carefully considered to provide visual interest at the sidewalk level.

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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board expressed interest in landscaped open space that is located at ground level at entry locations and along the street front that is visible to pedestrians. The Board was very supportive and interested in the through-block pathway along the north side and the 15-foot setback area for the live/work units along the south edge. The Board encouraged that these areas be well lit for safety. The Board also suggested exploration of a pathway design that cuts through the site using the courtyard open space.

- 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the visibility of the south facing façade and the existing lower-scaled buildings to the south and noted that this façade should be treated with visual interest to alleviate the potential for blank walls. The eastern half of the south façade should be treated architecturally, while the western half should be treated architecturally and with landscaping. Secured access and lighting to the area along the south façade will also be important elements to consider and design.

- D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas. Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that all service needs should be provided for within the building.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board focused on the proposed public pathway through the block along the north side of the site, as well as the setback area along the south side of the site, abutting the ground level live/work units. Both of these areas should be well-lit and include transparency or other elements to encourage visibility to and from these spaces to increase safety. The area along the south should be secured.

- D-11 Commercial Transparency. Commercial storefronts should be transparent, allowing for a direct visual connection between pedestrians on the sidewalk and the activities occurring on the interior of a building. Blank walls should be avoided.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board felt that the live/work units should express a strong retail appearance with transparency, large storefront windows, opportunities for signage and individual expression, as well as other features that are associated with commercial uses. The Board expressed concern with the live/work units that are depressed from the sidewalk grade and agreed that the design of the commercial appearance of these units will be a critical challenge they hope to see addressed at the next meeting.

- D-12 Residential Entries and Transitions. For residential projects in commercial zones, the space between the residential entry and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and a visually interesting street front for pedestrians. Residential buildings should enhance the character of the streetscape with small gardens, stoops and other elements that work to create a transition between the public sidewalk and private entry.**

See A-6. The Board specifically noted that overhead weather protection should be provided and used to create identifiable entrances.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed at length the solar and shade impacts of the proposed structure and the need to better understand these impacts and designing the landscaping and hardscaping accordingly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

At the Recommendation meeting, the Board discussed the response to the EDG and offered the following recommendations for the proposal to meet the applicable Design Review Guidelines identified at the EDG meeting.

1. The Board expressed appreciation for the quality material palette and noted concern that the quality might be reduced with future revisions. The Board recommended a condition that the fiber cement shall be the proposed Natura brand, or a similar commercial grade quality. (C-2, C-4)
2. The elevations are well-designed. The Board expressed some concern that the Recommendation packet didn't include detailed floor plans indicating window locations, but noted that the Recommendation is based on the design of the elevations shown in the packet. (C-2)
3. The Board noted that the design of limited and integrated balconies is a positive aspect of the design. The Board suggested that the applicant could consider including pivot windows or large sliders, given the small number of balconies and the importance of connection between indoor and outdoor spaces. The Board declined to recommend a condition for this item. (A-7)
4. The Board expressed appreciation for the quality of design and the public connections through the courtyard and the near the south property line. (A-7, D-1)

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

No departures were requested with this application.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation summarized below was based on the design review packet dated June 25, 2012, and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the June 25, 2012 Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, the four Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design, with the following condition:

1. The fiber cement panels should be Natura brand as proposed, or a similar commercial grade quality. (C-2 and C-4).

DECISION – DESIGN REVIEW

The proposed design is **CONDITIONALLY GRANTED**, subject to the conditions listed below.

SEPA

Environmental review resulting in a Threshold Determination is required pursuant to the Seattle State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), WAC 197-11, and the Seattle SEPA Ordinance (Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 25.05)

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant dated March 21, 2012. The Department of Planning and Development has analyzed and annotated the environmental checklist submitted by the project applicant; reviewed the project plans and any additional information in the file, and pertinent comments which may have been received regarding this proposed action have been considered. As indicated in the checklist, this action may result in adverse impacts to the environment. However, due to their temporary nature and limited effects, the impacts are not expected to be significant.

Codes and development regulations applicable to this proposed project will provide sufficient mitigation for most of the impacts and no further conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665). Further discussion and mitigation of some impacts is warranted, as listed below.

Short Term Impacts

Noise

The project is expected to generate loud noise during demolition, grading and construction. These impacts would be especially adverse in the early morning, in the evening, and on weekends. The Seattle Noise Ordinance permits increases in permissible sound levels associated with construction and equipment between the hours of 7:00 AM and 10:00 PM on weekdays and 9:00 AM and 10:00 PM on weekends. Some of the surrounding properties are developed with housing and will be impacted by construction noise. The limitations stipulated in the Noise Ordinance are not sufficient to mitigate noise impacts; therefore, pursuant to SEPA authority, the applicant shall be required to limit periods of construction activities (including but not limited to grading, deliveries, framing, roofing, and painting) to non-holiday weekdays from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, unless modified through a Construction Noise Management Plan, to be determined by DPD prior to issuance of a building permit.

Long Term Impacts

Historic Preservation

Five existing structures on site are more than 50 years old and were referred to the Department of Neighborhoods for examination of potential landmark eligibility. The structures were deemed unlikely to qualify for landmark status (LPB 379/12).

The site is also across the street from a designed historic landmark (the Louisa Building). Department of Neighborhoods reviewed the proposal and determined that no mitigation was required for potential impacts to this landmark (LPB 340/12).

Parking and Traffic

The applicant submitted traffic study information, including a report (“Transportation Impact Analysis, Ballard Tallman Residential” Prepared by TranspoGroup July 2012, and a memorandum dated August 31, 2012). This information was reviewed by the DPD Transportation Planner. No significant traffic issues were identified and no mitigation was warranted.

DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE

This decision was made after review by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and form. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirement of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21.C), including the requirement to inform the public of agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

[X] Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21.030(2) (c).

The lead agency for this proposal has determined that it does not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required under RCW 43.21C.030 (2)(c). This decision was made after review of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the lead agency. This information is available to the public on request.

- There is no comment period for this DNS.
- This DNS is issued after using the optional DNS process in WAC 197-11-355 and Early review DNS process in SMC 25.05.355. There is no further comment period on the DNS.
- This DNS is issued under WAC 197-11-340(2); the lead agency will not act on this proposal for 14 days after the date of issuance of a DNS.

SEPA - CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

Prior to Issuance of a Building Permit

1. If the applicant intends to work outside of the limits of the hours of construction described in condition #2, a Construction Noise Management Plan shall be required, subject to review and approval by DPD. The Plan shall include proposed management of construction related noise, efforts to mitigate noise impacts, and community outreach efforts to allow people within the immediate area of the project to have opportunities to contact the site to express concern about noise. Elements of noise mitigation may be incorporated into any Construction Management Plans required to mitigate any short-term transportation impacts that result from the project.

During Construction

2. Construction activities (including but not limited to demolition, grading, deliveries, framing, roofing, and painting) shall be limited to non-holiday weekdays from 7am to 6pm. Interior work that involves mechanical equipment, including compressors and generators, may be allowed on Saturdays between 9am and 6pm once the shell of the structure is completely enclosed, provided windows and doors remain closed. Non-noisy activities, such as site security, monitoring, weather protection shall not be limited by this condition. This condition may be modified through a Construction Noise Management Plan, required prior to issuance of a building permit as noted in condition #1.

DESIGN REVIEW - CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

Prior to Issuance of a Building Permit

3. The building permit plans shall specify the fiber cement exterior panels as Natura brand as proposed, or a similar commercial grade quality.

Prior to Certificate of Occupancy

4. The Land Use Planner shall inspect materials, colors, and design of the constructed project. All items shall be constructed and finished as shown at the design recommendation meeting and the subsequently updated Master Use Plan set. Any change to the proposed design, materials, or colors shall require prior approval by the Land Use Planner (Shelley Bolser 206-733-9067 or shelley.bolser@seattle.gov).
5. The applicant shall provide a landscape improvement checklist from Director's Rule 10-2011, indicating that all vegetation has been installed per approved landscape plans. Any change to the landscape plans approved with this Master Use Permit shall be approved by the Land Use Planner (Shelley Bolser (206) 733-9067 or shelley.bolser@seattle.gov).

For the Life of the Project

6. The building and landscape design shall be substantially consistent with the materials represented at the Recommendation meeting and in the materials submitted after the Recommendation meeting, before the MUP issuance. Any change to the proposed design, including materials or colors, shall require prior approval by the Land Use Planner (Shelley Bolser 206-733-9067 or shelley.bolser@seattle.gov).

Signature: _____ (signature on file) Date: October 4, 2012
Shelley Bolser, AICP, LEED AP
Senior Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development

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