



# 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:** 3009048

**Applicant Name:** Joanna Spaulding for Gretchen Wardsmith

**Address of Proposal:** 6204 Seaview Avenue NW

#### SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Administrative Design Review to allow a four story, 4-unit residential structure with 1,100 sq. ft. of office at grade. Parking for four vehicles will be located within the structure. Existing single family structures to be demolished. Environmental review includes future short subdivision.

The following approvals are required:

**Administrative Design Review** - Chapter 23.41, (SMC) including departures from development standards: structure width & depth, open space, front & side setbacks, parking & access, and curbcut width.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The 2,812 square foot project site is located in a narrow strip of lots between Seaview Avenue Northwest to the west and the Ballard Terminal railroad tracks to the east. The site is near Shilshole Marina in the Ballard neighborhood. It is zoned Commercial 1 with a 40 foot height limit (C1-40). Surrounding property to the south, north and west is zoned C1-40 and property to the east is zoned Single Family 5000.



The site is currently occupied by two older single family structures to be removed. To the south is the Seattle Youth Hostel and to the north is another single family structure. The surrounding property in the commercial zone is developed with a mixture of commercial uses with some mixed use development. Many of the businesses are water-related or water-dependent.

The site itself is relatively level with a 2' drop from the R-O-W grade to the eastern edge of the lot. Directly east of the property is a 25% slope rising 10' to 12' up to the level of the railroad tracks. The property abutting to the east is developed with railroad right of way owned by Burlington Northern and the City of Seattle. Farther east and upslope, property is developed with single family homes.

Because of the challenges posed by the size of the site the applicant has volunteered for the Administrative Design Review process to request departures from development standards for the C1-40 zone. Administrative Design Review is conducted by DPD staff and does not involve a Design Review Board.

### **PROPOSAL**

The applicant proposes to remove the existing houses and construct four loft-style residential units above three separate small commercial spaces. This would not be live-work because there would be no internal connection between the spaces. A future short subdivision is planned to allow four separate ownerships, three with a residential unit and a separate commercial space that could be used by the resident or rented separately. The fourth residential unit above the garage entrance would not have a commercial space. Four parking spaces for the residents would be provided behind the commercial spaces under the building at the rear of the site. Access to both the residential units and commercial spaces would be from entrances off of Seaview Avenue.

### **DESIGN PRESENTATION**

Three schemes were presented in the Early Design Guidance materials. Due to the constraints of the site they all share the same ground floor footprint, have three residential floors with balconies and roof decks and all would require code departures. Alternative A has the fewest departures, achieved by pushing the building toward the street to allow for the required setback from residential zoning on the upper floors. Alternative B would push the upper stories to the eastern property line to allow for west facing decks at the second and fourth floors and lower the height of the commercial space from 13' to 11'. Alternative C (the preferred option) is similar to B but has an angled, rather than stepped front façade.

### **DEPARTURES**

The applicant is requesting the following Land Use Code departures: Street Level Uses SMC 23.47A.008B3; Residential Entries SMC 23.47A008D2; Street Level Standards SMC 23.47A.005D3; Site Triangle SMC 23.54.030G.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The EDG comment period ended June 11, 2008. Three written comments on the project were received during the comment period. One comment concerned the worsening traffic in the area and the hazard of driveways intersecting the sidewalk. The property owner to the north was curious about the sight triangle requirements and whether development on his site would be eligible for similar code departures requested by this project. Another comment supported the redevelopment of the site. The Master Use Permit application was submitted October 13, 2008 and Notice of Application was published on October 30, 2008. Three were received during the 14 day comment period which ended on November 12, 2008: two comments supported the project and one comment expressed concern about increased traffic.

### **PRIORITIES:**

After visiting the site and analyzing the site in its context and the conceptual massing and parking scheme provided by the proponent, and reviewing public comment, the Director provides the following siting and design guidance 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 for this project. The Department's guidance appears after each guideline and final recommendations follow in *italicized* text.

**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 site characteristics driving the design are the very small size of the site, the views to the west and the railroad tracks to the east. The east façade of the building will be very visible considering the abutting parcel to the east is a railroad right of way and will not be developed. Given the need to insulate against train noise and the proposed departure to place the building at the property line openings on that wall will be minimal; however there should be some sort of decorative treatment proposed.

*The proposed design minimizes windows on the east façade facing the railroad tracks and decorative grills are proposed for the garage enclosure at the lower level. Additional landscaping is also proposed for this side of the structure.*

**A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street:**

*Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street*

It appears that the proposed entry insets will be shared between the commercial and residential spaces. The entrances should be designed to maximize safety, usability, and provide a distinction between the two entrance types.

*The proposed commercial and residential entrances are clearly distinguished from one another by the use of very different materials and the placement of the entrances on different planes. The residential entries will wood with large address numbers and will be set back approximately five feet from the commercial entrances. The commercial entrances are proposed to be all glass and set at the property line.*

**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 building is proposed to be brought forward to the property line, so the only "transition" space would be created by the awning and planting strip. Detailed designs and sketches of this area should be provided at the recommendation stage.

*Detailed designs and sketches have been provided for the street level façade showing continuous overhead weather protection and landscaping in front of the commercial spaces.*

**A-7 Residential Open Space**

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

Since there is no ground level open space proposed the residential balconies will need to be designed to be adequate to fulfill that function.

*Each residential unit will have two private decks at the 2<sup>nd</sup> and fourth levels in addition to private rooftop decks.*

**A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access**

*Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties and pedestrian safety.*

The location of the existing curb cut in relation to the site's north property line should be shown on the recommendation drawings. The safety implications of two closely spaced driveways should be analyzed.

*The existing curb cut will be removed and be replaced by a curb cut at approximately the center of the site allowing access to the parking garage thereby reducing the safety concerns.*

**C. Architectural Elements and Material**

**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 concept.*
- *Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building.*

The design and materials chosen should express the distinction between the commercial ground floor and residential upper stories while creating a harmonious whole.

*The commercial spaces at ground level will have transparent glass storefronts and glass entry doors. The residential units above, while having large windows will employ non-transparent window coverings to provide privacy from the street and other units.*

**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.*

The proponent should consider materials and finishes that convey a sense of permanence and design of the building entrances that afford maximum connection to the street. At the recommendation stage the applicant should submit a color and materials board.

*Proposed materials will consist of blue-gray painted Hardy cement siding, corrugated metal siding and clear cedar lap siding. The street level awing will be wood with metal supports. Decorative metal grating will be used to conceal the lower level garage on the east facade.*

**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.*

The garage door should be the minimum width allowed by code and detailed with colors and materials to read as part of the façade since it will be a significant element of the streetscape.

*The garage entry door is proposed to be a glass roll up door that will appear to be another storefront.*

**D. Pedestrian Environment**

**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.*

The east elevation of the building will be visible to trail users. Design the building to minimize any blank walls by providing landscaping, detail and texture. See comments about the east façade under site planning. While the commercial spaces are proposed to be largely glass storefronts if they are vacant or intermittently used they will not activate the street.

*The proposed design of the east faced used a combination of painted hardy cement siding and clear cedar lap siding to provide visual interest in addition to various sizes and placement of windows. The lower level garage area is concealed by decorative grating with artwork attached.*

#### **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.*

Space should be set aside in the common parking garage for garbage and recycling collection so that the containers are not left on the street. The residential neighbors from above will be looking onto the roof of this project so the design must address this issue. The Director wants the rooftop to be well organized and asks the architect to explore a green roof system or some other creative option.

*Adequate is provided in the parking garage for the residential garbage containers. As the proposal includes a future unit lot subdivision, the owners of the residential units will also own the commercial spaces. It is anticipated that any garbage generated by the small commercial spaces will be disposed in the corresponding residential containers.*

#### **D-7 Personal Safety and Security**

*Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.*

Provide appropriate site lighting to create a safe environment for residents. Create spaces that enhance safety and security. Demonstrate that vehicles exiting the parking garage can exit safely without a code compliant sight triangle.

*Both residential and commercial entries are proposed to be lighted separately.*

### **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.*

The design should enhance the planting strip to include street trees to help to soften the scale of the project and to provide a sense of privacy for owners.

*Extensive landscaping is proposed at the plating strip and in front of the commercial storefronts. Street trees approved the SDOT forester will planted as well.*

**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.*

**E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions**

*The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.*

The Shilshole Bay Condominiums were able to obtain an easement for landscaping along the railroad embankment and the Director asks the developer to pursue a similar arrangement. The Director wants to see detailed landscape plans that depict the residential open spaces, the streetscape and the abutting railroad right of way. See additional comments under Site Planning (A).

**DEPARTURES**

The applicant is requesting the following Land Use Code departures:

Standard	Request	Justification	Recommendation
SMC 23.47A.008B3 Non-residential use depth of 30 feet and minimum 15 feet except if requirement exceeds 50% of footprint	To allow commercial spaces of 19' to 21' depth within a building depth of 35' to 46'	Departure is required to accommodate four cars in the garage. A-1	DPD recognizes the difficulties of the site shape and location. The applicant has provided floor plan layouts that demonstrate that these small commercial spaces could be rentable. DPD, therefore, grants this departure.
SMC 23.47A.008D2 Residential entries must be set back 10' or raised 4' above street grade	To reduce residential entry setback to approximately 2.5'	The residential entry would be combined with the commercial entry and set back only enough to accommodate a door swing. A larger setback could create an unsafe hiding place. A6, D7	Because no living space is located at the street level, DPD, therefore, grants this departure.
SMC 23.47A.005D3 Residential uses may not exceed 20% of a street level façade when facing an arterial.	To allow greater than 20% of the street-level façade to be devoted to residential uses (increase to 38%).	The combination of the individual residential entries and the garage door serving the residential garage would exceed the limitation; however there is no other access point.	DPD recognizes the difficulties of the limited size of the site. The design integrates the residential entries and the garage entrance well. DPD, therefore, grants this departure.
SMC 23.54.030G Site Triangle-a 10 foot sight triangle at the intersection of the driveway and sidewalk must be provided	A 6 foot sight triangle	To gain an adequate parking area within the building and maintain an enclosed security perimeter a 10 foot sight triangle cannot be provided. The sidewalk is wide enough to accommodate this departure request without endangering the public so long as we locate street trees in such a way that they do not obscure traffic sight lines.	DPD agrees that there is adequate clearance at the sidewalk to prevent endangering the public. DPD, therefore, grants this departure.

**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 October 13, 2008. 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.
2. Update the plans to include corrections dated January 27, 2009 from the zoning reviewer.

*Prior to Certificate of Occupancy*

3. 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*

4. 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.

*For the Life of the Project*

5. 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.
6. 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.

7. 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.
8. 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: April 20, 2009  
Marti Stave, Land Use Planner  
Department of Planning and Development

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