



City of Seattle

Department of Planning and Development
Diane M. Sugimura, Director

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

Application Numbers: 3012473
Applicant Name: Steven Tangney, West Coast Self Storage
Address of Proposal: 3736 Rainier Avenue South

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTIONS

Land Use Application to allow a five-story, mini-warehouse with 126,197 square feet including enclosed parking for 14 vehicles located at-grade. Existing structure to be demolished.

The following approvals are required:

Design Review - Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Section 23.41

SEPA - Environmental Determination pursuant to SMC 25.05

SEPA DETERMINATION: Exempt DNS MDNS EIS

DNS with conditions*

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

* Notice of the Early Determination of Non-significance was published on October 4, 2012.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes to construct a five-story mini-warehouse of 126, 197 square feet on Rainier Avenue South. Fourteen parking spaces would be provided at-grade.

Due to the confined infill site, the applicant provided one massing scheme and three variations on access. The massing diagram presented at the EDG meeting illustrates a five story structure with a slight curve along the Rainier Ave. S. façade. At the corner of Rainier Ave. and 33rd Avenue S., the structure steps back modestly from the acute angle formed by the two streets. The east elevation parallels or mirrors the street orientation of 33rd Ave. S. The north elevation across from Courtland Place follows the dominant orthogonal street grid of the neighborhood rather than mimics the irregular property line.

All three design options locate vehicular access near the corner of 33rd Ave. S. and the esplanade along Courtland Place. Scheme # 1 has one point of entry. The other schemes have a second means of access on Rainier Ave. S. approximately at the parcel's mid-point. At the EDG meeting, the applicant and the Board chose to discuss only Option # 1. The location of the self storage office area represents the only other notable variation among the schemes. Two schemes place this accessory use mid-parcel on Rainier Ave. Option # 1 orients the office close to the corner of the two streets.

At the Second EDG meeting, the applicant refined two of the options. The variations in these design scenarios occur at the massing at the two corners along Rainier Ave and in the use of materials and colors. The buff colored Scheme B has fewer windows and more concrete masonry block than Scheme A's greater variety of colors (blues, grays and yellows) and more extensive use of metal panels. Each scheme attempts to provide texture and variation by using expanses of multi-colored, vertical metal panels to reduce visually the horizontal dimension of the facades.

By the Recommendation meeting, the applicant had refined the design and coordinated landscaping and art into the presentation documents.

SITE & VICINITY

The 27,215 sq. ft. site lies within a Commercial Two (C2) zone within the North Rainier Hub Urban Village. A vacant car lot and service shed occupy the subject parcel. Two streets, Rainier Ave. S. and 33rd Ave. S. define the relatively flat site's western and southern boundaries. The Rainier Court complex defines the northern and eastern boundaries. The site lies within an environmentally critical area liquefaction zone.

The surrounding area has a quilt of land uses and building styles. Rainier Court, at this time, comprises two mixed use structures containing affordable housing and commercial space. The complex forms a strong edge defining two to three sides of the three subject property. A multi-phased plan for Rainier Court includes additional development on a total of approximately seven acres. Several parcels close to the subject site and across Rainier Ave. S. comprise auto sales and repair businesses. The orientation of commercial enterprises along the Rainier corridor caters to consumers using automobiles. Rainier Valley Square shopping center includes a Safeway. Beyond the parcels that front onto Rainier Ave., land uses include lowrise multi-family (townhouses predominantly) and older single family residences.

ANALYSIS - DESIGN REVIEW

Public Comments

Eight members of the public affixed their names to the EDG sign-in sheet. They raised the following issues:

- The residents of the neighboring buildings do not want to view blank walls.
- 33rd Ave S. and the esplanade in front of Courtland Place fills up with school buses, medical and fire trucks and access buses for seniors and the disabled. These vehicles park in the place where the garage entrance is proposed.
- Place the vehicular entrance on Rainier Ave. S.
- The located of the proposed garage entry should be a public gathering area. It does not make sense to place open space on Rainier and 33rd Ave. S.
- This is an environment friendly to seniors and children. Seniors wait for their buses at the corner of 33rd Ave S. and the esplanade. People like to congregate there. (Mentioned by several people).
- The parking lot in front of Courtland Place becomes quite congested with traffic and people.
- Make the exterior interesting. Coordinate the colors with the existing apartment buildings.
- Add pedestrian amenities around the site.
- It is disappointing that this will be a storage facility. The community goal is to activate Rainier Ave. It should be pedestrian oriented.
- New senior housing is being developed nearby.
- Make the street level interesting. Add windows, art, landscaping.
- There is a lot of activity along the esplanade.
- The community wants this area to be a vibrant, mixed community. The people are concerned with this single use.
- Consider adding an accessory use (retail) to liven up the street front.

At the second EDG meeting, five members of the public added their names to the sign-in sheet. Speakers raised the following comments:

- Supports incorporating art and interesting landscaping into the design.
- The proposal is a nuanced response to the guidelines.
- Appreciates the textures on the proposed building.
- Portions of the building facades appear out of scale. Two large blue squares on the north elevation seem odd.

GUIDELINES

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponent, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the siting and design guidance described below and identified highest priority by letter and number from the guidelines found in the City of Seattle's "Design Review: Guidelines for Multi-family and Commercial Buildings". The Neighborhood specific guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

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.

1st EDG meeting: The site has three if not four significant sides. Due to the retail uses fronting the active parking lot at the base of Courland Place, the elevations of the first floor of the proposal must engage with the activity that occurs along the esplanade at Rainier Court and the retail storefronts at the base of the Dakota.

The Board discouraged the serrated edge at the northern most corner on Rainier Ave S., preferring a wall parallel to the Courland Place facade before it bends becoming perpendicular to 33rd Ave S.

2nd EDG Meeting: The Board requested continuous canopies along the two adjacent streets. The canopies must provide weather protection and enhance the area's generous pedestrian amenities established by the Dakota and Courland Place.

In accepting the applicant's preferred option (Scheme A) for further refinement, the Board tacitly indicated its satisfaction with the relationship of the building's northwest corner and the site's geometry.

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

1st EDG meeting: The first floor should have generous amounts of canopies and glazing along Rainier Ave S., 33rd Ave S. and the esplanade between Courland Place and the site. Providing active facades enhances the sense of a neighborhood or "main street" that has been achieved along these edges. Installation of art, landscaping and community amenities (kiosks, benches) would complement the commercial uses along these edges.

2nd EDG Meeting: Although the applicant added canopies to the facades on 33rd Ave S and Rainier Ave S. these were not as extensive or as deep as the Board expects. The development team should focus explicitly on providing amenities (art, benches, landscaping) that benefit the community and enhancing the building as a work of art or sculpture.

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

1st EDG meeting: The location of the office and garage at the first level should complement the commercial activity along the perimeter of Rainier Court. Placement of overhead weather protection, windows and entrances should also reinforce activity rather than as a source of enervation with blank walls.

2nd EDG Meeting: The Board accepted the placement of the leasing office at the corner of 33rd Ave S. and Rainier Ave S. The canopies and art should be much more robust than shown at the 2nd EDG meeting. Extra art work produced for Rainier Court should be installed on the site, but more art should be integrated into the design of the project.

Where the architect illustrated tromp l'oeil roll up doors and grates at street level, the building should have artist designed panels or grills that contribute to the streetscape experience by providing both a finer scale and texture to the facades and points of interest. The artistic panels or doors at the street level façade could be tied into the community's history or other aspects of the neighborhood.

A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites. Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.

1st EDG meeting: Respecting Rainier Court represents for the Board and neighbors the sine qua non of the project's success.

2nd EDG Meeting: The Board encouraged the developer to provide landscaping in the area between the esplanade/parking lot at Courtland Place and the applicant's building including the area controlled by Courtland Place.

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.

1st EDG meeting: Acknowledging the public's interest in keeping the corner between 33rd Ave. S. and the parking lot an active area for the residents and others who enjoy congregating there, the Board directed the applicant to shift the garage entrance to the south in order to provide more room at the corner and to move the driveway and its curb cut away from the Dakota garage entrance.

2nd EDG Meeting: The applicant did not shift the location of access to the parking garage but added a small covered open space between the garage entry and the north property line. The Board did not request changes to the curb cut or garage entry.

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.

1st EDG meeting: See Board guidance for A-1 (proposal's northern most corner) and A-8 (creating a small plaza at the northeast corner).

2nd EDG Meeting: See guidance for A-1 and A-8.

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.

1st EDG meeting: The nature of a self storage facility reinforces its building bulk. Its program, quite different from the adjacent apartments, functions commonly as a windowless, thick structure in contrast to large apartment buildings, which require greater

linearity and natural light. At the upper levels, the proposed building facades should form a composition of elements that diminish the apparent bulk by creating a scale that relates to the individual. Any number of strategies (modulation, choice of materials and their variation in unit sizes and number) could be deployed. Some designs of self storage facilities locate the hallways along the perimeter of the building allowing for greater amounts of transparency and a concomitant reduction in scale due to the sense of individuation produced by the windows.

2nd EDG Meeting: In general, the Board accepted the proposed massing as shown in Scheme A of the 2nd EDG meeting booklet. In response to the site's acute angles and the building program, the architect pulled the façade back from the two corners on Rainier Ave forming chamfers where the building would have the most exposure to vehicles on Rainier Ave. The applicant does not employ particularly deep changes in modulation of the walls to address the three sizeable elevations on 33rd Ave S, Rainier Ave S. and across from Courtland Place, preferring patterns in the materials' orientation and colors to reduce the appearance of bulk. In Scheme A, placement of fenestration at the corners also serves to reduce the building's bulk. The Board encouraged the architect to reconsider the proportions that define the composition of the north elevation.

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.**

1st EDG meeting: The well defined edges of the Rainier Court complex and the bend in Rainier Ave produce a distinct architectural context. Essential characteristics of the two buildings (and possibly future buildings in the complex) evidenced by similarity in heights, masonry bases with large storefront windows, frequent and repetitive modulation of the facades, and bright colors produce a visual ensemble. Decorative masonry and tile work, public art and high planters conducive to informal public gathering also provide this small cluster of buildings with a strong identity.

2nd EDG Meeting: A brief discussion focused on whether the colors of Scheme A relate to the adjacent buildings. The Board did not request changes to the color selection.

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. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.**

1st EDG meeting: This guideline will be an important consideration as the Board reviews the project at the next meetings.

2nd EDG Meeting: The Board envisions the building's exterior as a large site specific work of art. Lighting the Rainier elevation, creating art screens where the architect has indicated inoperable doors on the 33rd Ave and Rainier Ave elevations, installing interesting landscaping and using fritted glass on some of the elevations would all act to reduce the building's large scale and provide points of interest for pedestrians and the

neighboring community. These actions would help achieve the Board's expectation to transform the proposed structure from merely a vault for personal storage to a building that fits into and enhances its neighborhood.

C-3 Human Scale. The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements, and details to achieve a good human scale.

1st EDG meeting: The building's success depends upon the architect's ability to reduce this building type's bulk to discrete elements and to arrange them in a pleasing composition.

2nd EDG Meeting: Much more extensive use of art, canopies, and landscaping will contribute to a finer building scale and one that can be appreciated by pedestrians.

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.

1st EDG meeting: At the next EDG meeting, the applicant will need to present character studies showing the development team's ideas for the exterior.

2nd EDG Meeting: Discussion focused on the color selection for the two chamfered corners. Explore using blue on part or all of the spandrels to tie these most visible portions of the facility to the rest of the elevations.

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.

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.

1st EDG meeting: Acknowledging the community's interest in locating a small plaza at the corner of 33rd Ave S. and the esplanade, the Board agreed that an open space was more appropriate at this location than at the corner of 33rd and Rainier Ave S.

2nd EDG Meeting: Functional amenities should be provided along the streetscape. Add benches, pedestrian scaled lighting, continuous canopies and landscaping along 33rd Ave S. and Rainier Ave. S.

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.

1st EDG meeting: See guidance for B-1. Blank walls along the first floor should be avoided. Art, landscaping, glazing, canopies and community amenities should be features of the first level along the entire perimeter of the base.

2nd EDG Meeting: As discussed above, the orientation and change in materials and the colors somewhat serve to reduce the building's height and bulk. Several other techniques should be employed to diminish the extent of the blank walls. These include adding amenities (benches, interesting paving etc.) at street level, changing the inoperable roll-up doors to artistic panels or decorative grill work and providing continuous canopies that extend over the sidewalk. Revisions to the proportions of the siding may also change the perception of the extensiveness of blank walls.

D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures. The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape. Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.

1st EDG meeting: Since most of the first floor of the building will be devoted to parking, this guideline is particular germane.

2nd EDG Meeting: See discussion for D-2.

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

D-9 Commercial Signage. Signs should add interest to the street front environment and should be appropriate for the scale and character desired in the area.

1st EDG Meeting: This represents an important consideration as design development occurs.

2nd EDG Meeting: At the Recommendation meeting, the applicant will need to present a signage concept.

D-10 Commercial Lighting. Appropriate levels of lighting should be provided in order to promote visual interest and a sense of security for people in commercial districts during evening hours. Lighting may be provided by incorporation into the building façade, the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, in landscaped areas, and/or on signage.

1st EDG meeting: By the Recommendation meeting, the applicant needs to provide a concept lighting plan.

2nd EDG Meeting: The earlier guidance remains relevant.

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.

1st EDG meeting: The use of transparency should be one tool among others to engage the proposed structure with the streetscape.

Locating hallways on the perimeter of the floors would provide greater visual interest as windows would reduce the building's scale and provide visual interest to the neighbors.

2nd EDG Meeting: The amount of windows at the corners and along Rainier Ave met with the Board's approval. Some of the upper floor windows could be translucent and lit from behind to produce a warm glow that might not occur otherwise. Provide a night time rendering of the elevations for the Board to review.

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.

1st EDG meeting: The neighboring Courtland Place has a series of raised planters designed to provide informal gathering spaces as local residents and clients of the businesses can sit on or lean against them. This approach to landscaping goes beyond providing visual interest. It helps fosters a sense of community and activates the street.

The public and the Board acknowledged that the proposal should assist in encouraging pedestrian activity along Rainier Ave.

2nd EDG Meeting: The Board supported the developer's idea to landscape the area between the parking lot and the proposed building façade even though a portion of the area is not on the subject property. The larger square shaped area should be planted with trees capable of maturing to a substantial height in order to mitigate an expansive blank wall.

MASTER USE PERMIT APPLICATION

The applicant revised the design and applied for a Master Use Permit with a design review component on September 19, 2012.

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD RECOMMENDATION

The Design Review Board conducted a Final Recommendation meeting on December 18th, 2012 respectively to review the applicant's formal project proposal developed in response to the previously identified priorities. At the public meetings, site plans, elevations, floor plans, landscaping plans, and computer renderings of the proposed exterior materials were presented for the Board members' consideration.

Public Comments

One member of the public affixed his names to the Recommendation meeting sign-in sheet. No one spoke during the public comment period.

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.

1st EDG meeting: The site has three if not four significant sides. Due to the retail uses fronting the active parking lot at the base of Courtland Place, the elevations of the first floor of the proposal must engage with the activity that occurs along the esplanade at Rainier Court and the retail storefronts at the base of the Dakota.

The Board discouraged the serrated edge at the northern most corner on Rainier Ave S., preferring a wall parallel to the Courland Place facade before it bends becoming perpendicular to 33rd Ave S.

2nd EDG Meeting: The Board requested continuous canopies along the two adjacent streets. The canopies must provide weather protection and enhance the area's generous pedestrian amenities established by the Dakota and Courtland Place.

In accepting the applicant's preferred option (Scheme A) for further refinement, the Board tacitly indicated its satisfaction with the relationship of the building's northwest corner and the site's geometry.

Recommendation Meeting: Nearly continuous canopies grace the 33rd Ave. S. street frontage. On Rainier Ave S., the overhead weather protection covers a significant portion of the elevation. The areas not covered consist of deeper landscape niches.

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

1st EDG meeting: The first floor should have generous amounts of canopies and glazing along Rainier Ave S., 33rd Ave S. and the esplanade between Courtland Place and the site. Providing active facades enhances the sense of a neighborhood or "main street" that has been achieved along these edges. Installation of art, landscaping and community amenities (kiosks, benches) would complement the commercial uses along these edges.

2nd EDG Meeting: Although the applicant added canopies to the facades on 33rd Ave S and Rainier Ave S. these were not as extensive or as deep as the Board expects. The development team should focus explicitly on providing amenities (art, benches, landscaping) that benefit the community and enhancing the building as a work of art or sculpture.

Recommendation Meeting: The Board expressed its enthusiasm for the deeper canopies and the effort to integrate art and landscaping into the overall concept.

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

1st EDG meeting: The location of the office and garage at the first level should complement the commercial activity along the perimeter of Rainier Court. Placement of overhead weather protection, windows and entrances should also reinforce activity rather than as a source of enervation with blank walls.

2nd EDG Meeting: The Board accepted the placement of the leasing office at the corner of 33rd Ave S. and Rainier Ave S. The canopies and art should be much more robust than shown at the 2nd EDG meeting. Extra art work produced for Rainier Court should be installed on the site, but more art should be integrated into the design of the project. Where the architect illustrated tromp l'oeil roll up doors and grates at street level, the building should have artist designed panels or grills that contribute to the streetscape experience by providing both a finer scale and texture to the facades and points of interest. The artistic panels or doors at the street level façade could be tied into the community's history or other aspects of the neighborhood.

Recommendation Meeting: The applicant responded to the Board's request at the 2nd EDG meeting by employing an artist to create panels and grills for the lower facades. The Board praised the effort by the architect, artist and landscape architect.

A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites. Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.

1st EDG meeting: Respecting Rainier Court represents for the Board and neighbors the sine qua non of the project's success.

2nd EDG Meeting: The Board encouraged the developer to provide landscaping in the area between the esplanade/parking lot at Courtland Place and the applicant's building including the area controlled by Courtland Place.

Recommendation Meeting: The landscape architect's design adjacent to the esplanade/parking lot met the Board's expectations.

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.

1st EDG meeting: Acknowledging the public's interest in keeping the corner between 33rd Ave. S. and the parking lot an active area for the residents and others who enjoy congregating there, the Board directed the applicant to shift the garage entrance to the south in order to provide more room at the corner and to move the driveway and its curb cut away from the Dakota garage entrance.

2nd EDG Meeting: The applicant did not shift the location of access to the parking garage but added a small covered open space between the garage entry and the north property line. The Board did not request changes to the curb cut or garage entry.

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.

1st EDG meeting: See Board guidance for A-1 (proposal's northern most corner) and A-8 (creating a small plaza at the northeast corner).

2nd EDG Meeting: See guidance for A-1 and A-8.

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.

1st EDG meeting: The nature of a self storage facility reinforces its building bulk. Its program, quite different from the adjacent apartments, functions commonly as a windowless, thick structure in contrast to large apartment buildings, which require greater linearity and natural light. At the upper levels, the proposed building facades should form a composition of elements that diminish the apparent bulk by creating a scale that relates to the individual. Any number of strategies (modulation, choice of materials and their variation in unit sizes and number) could be deployed. Some designs of self storage facilities locate the hallways along the perimeter of the building allowing for greater amounts of transparency and a concomitant reduction in scale due to the sense of individuation produced by the windows.

2nd EDG Meeting: In general, the Board accepted the proposed massing as shown in Scheme A of the 2nd EDG meeting booklet. In response to the site's acute angles and the building program, the architect pulled the façade back from the two corners on Rainier Ave forming chamfers where the building would have the most exposure to vehicles on Rainier Ave. The applicant does not employ particularly deep changes in modulation of the walls to address the three sizeable elevations on 33rd Ave S, Rainier Ave S. and across from Courtland Place, preferring patterns in the materials' orientation and colors to reduce the appearance of bulk. In Scheme A, placement of fenestration at the corners also serves to reduce the building's bulk. The Board encouraged the architect to reconsider the proportions that define the composition of the north elevation.

Recommendation Meeting: The applicant changed the composition of the north elevation. The design received Board approval.

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.

1st EDG meeting: The well defined edges of the Rainier Court complex and the bend in Rainier Ave produce a distinct architectural context. Essential characteristics of the two buildings (and possibly future buildings in the complex) evidenced by similarity in heights, masonry bases with large storefront windows, frequent and repetitive modulation of the facades, and bright colors produce a visual ensemble. Decorative masonry and tile work, public art and high planters conducive to informal public gathering also provide this small cluster of buildings with a strong identity.

2nd EDG Meeting: A brief discussion focused on whether the colors of Scheme A relate to the adjacent buildings. The Board did not request changes to the color selection.

Recommendation Meeting: Deliberation focused on the hue of the proposed blue siding. No changes to the color were recommended.

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. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.

1st EDG meeting: This guideline will be an important consideration as the Board reviews the project at the next meetings.

2nd EDG Meeting: The Board envisions the building's exterior as a large site specific work of art. Lighting the Rainier elevation, creating art screens where the architect has indicated inoperable doors on the 33rd Ave and Rainier Ave elevations, installing interesting landscaping and using fritted glass on some of the elevations would all act to reduce the building's large scale and provide points of interest for pedestrians and the neighboring community. These actions would help achieve the Board's expectation to transform the proposed structure from merely a vault for personal storage to a building that fits into and enhances its neighborhood.

Recommendation Meeting: The changes to the elevations, the addition of art panels and grills, and the added landscaping all met the Board's expectations for the project.

C-3 Human Scale. The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements, and details to achieve a good human scale.

1st EDG meeting: The building's success depends upon the architect's ability to reduce this building type's bulk to discrete elements and to arrange them in a pleasing composition.

2nd EDG Meeting: Much more extensive use of art, canopies, and landscaping will contribute to a finer building scale and one that can be appreciated by pedestrians.

Recommendation Meeting: The changes to the base met the Board's desire for a building oriented to the pedestrian.

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.

1st EDG meeting: At the next EDG meeting, the applicant will need to present character studies showing the development team's ideas for the exterior.

2nd EDG Meeting: Discussion focused on the color selection for the two chamfered corners. Explore using blue on part or all of the spandrels to tie these most visible portions of the facility to the rest of the elevations.

Recommendation Meeting: The architect did not add blue to the spandrels. However, the blue storage unit doors inside the building will be seen from outside the glazed chamfered corners.

The Board noted that it prefers and encourages application of the mullion spacing as shown on the south corner rather than the northwest corner as represented on p. 26 of the Recommendation booklet.

Praising the artist's work, the Board encouraged inclusion of more art at the building base.

Discussion focused on the eaves; however, no changes were recommended.

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.

1st EDG meeting: Acknowledging the community's interest in locating a small plaza at the corner of 33rd Ave S. and the esplanade, the Board agreed that an open space was more appropriate at this location than at the corner of 33rd and Rainier Ave S.

2nd EDG Meeting: Functional amenities should be provided along the streetscape. Add benches, pedestrian scaled lighting, continuous canopies and landscaping along 33rd Ave S. and Rainier Ave. S.

Recommendation Meeting: As mentioned above, the project incorporates benches, extra sculptures from Rainier Court, which tie the proposal into the existing two building complex, generous landscaping, artistic panels/grillwork, and extensive canopies

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.

1st EDG meeting: See guidance for B-1. Blank walls along the first floor should be avoided. Art, landscaping, glazing, canopies and community amenities should be features of the first level along the entire perimeter of the base.

2nd EDG Meeting: As discussed above, the orientation and change in materials and the colors somewhat serve to reduce the building's height and bulk. Several other techniques should be employed to diminish the extent of the blank walls. These include adding amenities (benches, interesting paving etc.) at street level, changing the inoperable roll-up doors to artistic panels or decorative grill work and providing continuous canopies that extend over the sidewalk. Revisions to the proportions of the siding may also change the perception of the extensiveness of blank walls.

Recommendation Meeting: The design team met the expectations established at the second EDG meeting.

D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures. The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape. Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.

1st EDG meeting: Since most of the first floor of the building will be devoted to parking, this guideline is particular germane.

2nd EDG Meeting: See discussion for D-2.

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

D-9 Commercial Signage. Signs should add interest to the street front environment and should be appropriate for the scale and character desired in the area.

1st EDG Meeting: This represents an important consideration as design development occurs.

2nd EDG Meeting: At the Recommendation meeting, the applicant will need to present a signage concept.

Recommendation Meeting: The Board reviewed the signage concept.

D-10 Commercial Lighting. Appropriate levels of lighting should be provided in order to promote visual interest and a sense of security for people in commercial districts during evening hours. Lighting may be provided by incorporation into the building façade, the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, in landscaped areas, and/or on signage.

1st EDG meeting: By the Recommendation meeting, the applicant needs to provide a concept lighting plan.

2nd EDG Meeting: The earlier guidance remains relevant.

Recommendation Meeting: A computer generated rendering of the project's southeast corner at night pictures a well illuminated façade and streetscape.

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.

1st EDG meeting: The use of transparency should be one tool among others to engage the proposed structure with the streetscape.

Locating hallways on the perimeter of the floors would provide greater visual interest as windows would reduce the building's scale and provide visual interest to the neighbors.

2nd EDG Meeting: The amount of windows at the corners and along Rainier Ave met with the Board's approval. Some of the upper floor windows could be translucent and lit from behind to produce a warm glow that might not occur otherwise. Provide a night time rendering of the elevations for the Board to review.

Recommendation Meeting: The applicant provided a nighttime rendering with the pedestrian levels and glazed corners well illuminated.

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.

1st EDG meeting: The neighboring Courtland Place has a series of raised planters designed to provide informal gathering spaces as local residents and clients of the businesses can sit on or lean against them. This approach to landscaping goes beyond providing visual interest. It helps fosters a sense of community and activates the street.

The public and the Board acknowledged that the proposal should assist in encouraging pedestrian activity along Rainier Ave.

2nd EDG Meeting: The Board supported the developer's idea to landscape the area between the parking lot and the proposed building façade even though a portion of the area is not on the subject property. The larger square shaped area should be planted with trees capable of maturing to a substantial height in order to mitigate an expansive blank wall.

Recommendation Meeting: The landscape design on the north side along the parking lot incorporates a pathway, seating and a variety of trees. The latter should help obscure the blank wall facing Rainier Court.

Board Recommendations: The recommendations summarized below were based on the plans submitted at the December 18th, 2012 meeting. Design, siting or architectural details not specifically identified or altered in these recommendations are expected to remain as presented in the plans and other drawings available at the December 18th public meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities, and reviewing the plans and renderings, the three Design Review Board members present unanimously recommended approval of the subject design.

The Board did not recommend **CONDITIONS** for the project.

DIRECTOR'S ANALYSIS - DESIGN REVIEW

The Director finds no conflicts with SEPA requirements or state or federal laws, and has reviewed the City-wide Design Guidelines and finds that the Board neither exceeded its authority nor applied the guidelines inconsistently in the approval of this design. The Director agrees with the conditions recommended by the four Board members and the recommendation to approve the design, as stated above.

DECISION - DESIGN REVIEW

The proposed design is **CONDITIONALLY GRANTED**.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant dated September 19 2012. The information in the checklist, project plans, and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and decision. The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665 D) clarifies the relationship between codes, policies, and environmental review. Specific policies for each element of the environment, certain neighborhood plans and other policies explicitly referenced may serve as the basis for exercising substantive SEPA authority.

The Overview Policy states in part: "where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation" (subject to some limitations). Under certain limitations and/or circumstances (SMC 25.05.665 D 1-7) mitigation can be considered. Thus, a more detailed discussion of some of the impacts is appropriate.

Short-term Impacts

Construction activities could result in the following adverse impacts: construction dust and storm water runoff, erosion, emissions from construction machinery and vehicles, increased particulate levels, increased noise levels, occasional disruption of adjacent vehicular and pedestrian traffic, a small increase in traffic and parking impacts due to construction related vehicles, and increases in greenhouse gas emissions. Several construction-related impacts are mitigated by existing City codes and ordinances applicable to the project such as: the Noise Ordinance, the Stormwater Grading and Drainage Control Code, the Street Use Ordinance, and the Building Code. The following analyzes construction-related noise, air quality, earth, grading, construction impacts, traffic and parking impacts as well as its mitigation.

Noise

Noise associated with construction of the mixed use building and future phases could adversely affect surrounding uses in the area, which include residential and commercial uses. Surrounding uses are likely to be adversely impacted by noise throughout the duration of construction activities. Due to the proximity of the project site to residential uses, the limitations of the Noise Ordinance are found to be inadequate to mitigate the potential noise impacts. Pursuant to the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC.25.05.665) and the SEPA Construction Impacts Policy (SMC 25.05.675 B), mitigation is warranted.

Prior to issuance of demolition, grading and building permits, the applicant will submit a construction noise mitigation plan. This plan will include steps 1) to limit noise decibel levels and duration and 2) procedures for advanced notice to surrounding properties. The plan will be subject to review and approval by DPD. In addition to the Noise Ordinance requirements to reduce the noise impact of construction on nearby properties, all construction activities shall be limited to the following:

- 1) Non-holiday weekdays between 7:00 A.M and 6:00 P.M.
- 2) Non-holiday weekdays between 6:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M limited to quieter activities based on a DPD approved mitigation plan and public notice program outlined in the plan.
- 3) Saturdays between 9:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. limited to quieter activities based on a DPD approved mitigation plan and public notice program outlined in the plan.
- 4) Emergencies or work which must be done to coincide with street closures, utility interruptions or other similar necessary events, limited to quieter activities based on a DPD approved mitigation plan and public notice program outlined in the plan.

Air Quality

Construction for this project is expected to add temporarily particulates to the air that will result in a slight increase in auto-generated air contaminants from construction activities, equipment and worker vehicles; however, this increase is not anticipated to be significant. Federal auto emission controls are the primary means of mitigating air quality impacts from motor vehicles as stated in the Air Quality Policy (Section 25.05.675 SMC). To mitigate impacts of exhaust fumes on the directly adjacent residential uses, trucks hauling materials to and from the project site will not be allowed to queue on streets under windows of the nearby residential buildings.

Should asbestos be identified on the site, it must be removed in accordance with the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) and City requirements. PSCAA regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality and require permits for removal of asbestos during demolition. In order to ensure that PSCAA will be notified of the proposed demolition, a condition will be included pursuant to SEPA authority under SMC 25.05.675A which requires that a copy of the PSCAA permit be attached to the demolition permit, prior to issuance. This will assure proper handling and disposal of asbestos.

Earth

The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code (SGDCC) requires preparation of a soils report to evaluate the site conditions and provide recommendations for safe construction on sites where grading will involve cuts or fills of greater than three feet in height or grading greater than 100 cubic yards of material.

The soils report, construction plans, and shoring of excavations as needed, will be reviewed by the DPD Geo-technical Engineer and Building Plans Examiner who will require any additional soils-related information, recommendations, declarations, covenants and bonds as necessary to assure safe grading and excavation. This project constitutes a "large project" under the terms of the SGDCC (SMC 22.802.015 D). As such, there are many additional requirements for erosion control including a provision for implementation of best management practices and a requirement for incorporation of an engineered erosion control plan which will be reviewed

jointly by the DPD building plans examiner and geo-technical engineer prior to issuance of the permit. The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code provides extensive conditioning authority and prescriptive construction methodology to assure safe construction techniques are used; therefore, no additional conditioning is warranted pursuant to SEPA policies.

Grading

Excavation to construct the mixed use structure will be necessary. The maximum depth of the excavation is approximately 10 feet and will consist of an estimated 3,050 cubic yards of material. The soil removed will not be reused on the site and will need to be disposed off-site by trucks. City code (SMC 11.74) provides that material hauled in trucks not be spilled during transport. The City requires that a minimum of one foot of "freeboard" (area from level of material to the top of the truck container) be provided in loaded uncovered trucks which minimize the amount of spilled material and dust from the truck bed enroute to or from a site. Future phases of construction will be subject to the same regulations. No further conditioning of the grading/excavation element of the project is warranted pursuant to SEPA policies.

Construction Impacts

Construction activities including construction worker commutes, truck trips, the operation of construction equipment and machinery, and the manufacture of the construction materials themselves result in increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions which adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. While these impacts are adverse, they are not expected to be significant.

Traffic and Parking

Duration of construction of the apartment building may last approximately 10 months. During construction, parking demand will increase due to additional demand created by construction personnel and equipment. It is the City's policy to minimize temporary adverse impacts associated with construction activities and parking (SMC 25.05.675 B and M). Parking utilization along streets in the vicinity is near capacity and the demand for parking by construction workers during construction would likely reduce the supply of parking in the vicinity. Due to the large scale of the project, this temporary demand on the on-street parking in the vicinity due to construction workers' vehicles may be adverse. Upon completion of the parking garage, construction workers shall park in the garage. In order to minimize adverse impacts, the applicant will need to provide a construction worker parking plan to reduce on-street parking until the new garage is completed and safe to use. The authority to impose this condition is found in Section 25.05.675B2g of the Seattle SEPA Ordinance.

The construction of the project also will have adverse impacts on both vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the vicinity of the project site. During construction a temporary increase in traffic volumes to the site will occur, due to travel to the site by construction workers and the transport of construction materials. Approximately 3,050 cubic yards of soil are expected to be excavated from the project site. The soil removed for the garage structure will not be reused on the site and will need to be disposed off-site. Excavation and fill activity will require approximately 305 round trips with 10-yard hauling trucks or 152 round trips with 20-yard hauling trucks. Considering the large volumes of truck trips anticipated during construction, it is reasonable that truck traffic avoid the afternoon peak hours. Large (greater than two-axle) trucks will be prohibited from entering or exiting the site after 3:30 PM.

Truck access to and from the site shall be documented in a construction traffic management plan, to be submitted to DPD and SDOT prior to the beginning of construction. This plan also shall indicate how pedestrian connections around the site will be maintained during the construction period, with particular consideration given to maintaining pedestrian access along Rainier Ave. S. Compliance with Seattle's Street Use Ordinance is expected to mitigate any additional adverse impacts to traffic which would be generated during construction of this proposal.

Long-term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are also anticipated as a result of approval of this proposal including: increased surface water runoff due to greater site coverage by impervious surfaces; increased bulk and scale on the site; increased traffic in the area; increased demand for parking; and increased light and glare.

Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically these are: The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code which requires on site collection of stormwater with provisions for controlled tightline release to an approved outlet and may require additional design elements to prevent isolated flooding; the City Energy Code which will require insulation for outside walls and energy efficient windows; and the Land Use Code which controls site coverage, setbacks, building height and use and contains other development and use regulations to assure compatible development. Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances is adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation of most long-term impacts and no further conditioning is warranted by SEPA policies. However, due to the size and location of this proposal, green house gas emissions, historic preservation, traffic, and parking impacts.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Operational activities, primarily vehicular trips associated with the project and the project's energy consumption, are expected to result in increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions which adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. While these impacts are adverse, they are not expected to be significant.

Transportation

Gibson Traffic Consultants anticipates that the self storage complex will generate 261 new daily trips and 21 new PM peak hour trips. DPD does not anticipate that the impacts to level of service on nearby streets would be significant. No SEPA mitigation of traffic impacts to the nearby intersections is warranted.

Parking

Per SMC 23.54.015 Table A, no non-residential parking is required for uses in an urban village if the use is located within 1,320 feet of a street with frequent transit service. As the proposed development lies within the North Rainier Urban Village and sits within 600 feet of a transit stop, no parking is required. Nonetheless, the applicant proposes to add parking to the storage facility. For mini-warehouses, the average peak period parking demand rate is 1.35 vehicles per 100 storage units on a weekday. Based on this demand rate and the proposed 1,082 storage units, the parking demand would be 15 vehicles. Given the 14 spaces available, one client may have to find on-street parking.

DECISION - SEPA

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 requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21C), including the requirement to inform the public 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 43.21C.030 2C.
- [] Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030 2C.

CONDITIONS – DESIGN REVIEW

Prior to MUP Issuance

- 1) Provide the required sidewalk easement.

Prior to Commencement of Construction

- 2) Arrange a pre-construction meeting with the building contractor, building inspector, and land use planner to discuss expectations and details of the Design Review component of the project.

Prior to Issuance of all Construction Permits

- 3) Embed the MUP conditions in the cover sheet for all subsequent permits including updated building permit drawings.

Prior to Issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy

- 4) Compliance with all images and text on the MUP drawings, design review meeting 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 (Bruce P. Rips, 206.615-1392). An appointment with the assigned Land Use Planner must be made at least five 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.

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 (Bruce Rips, 206.615-1392). 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.

CONDITIONS – SEPA

Prior to Issuance of a Demolition, Grading, or Building Permit

- 6) Attach a copy of the PSCAA demolition permit to the building permit set of plans.
- 7) A construction traffic management plan shall be submitted to DPD and SDOT prior to the issuance of the permit. This plan will identify off-street construction worker parking, construction materials staging area; truck access routes to and from the site for excavation and construction phases; and sidewalk and street closures with neighborhood notice and posting procedures. The intent of the construction worker parking plan is to reduce on-street parking until the new garage is constructed and safe to use.

During Construction

- 8) Grading, delivery and pouring of concrete and similar noisy activities will be prohibited on Saturdays and Sundays. In addition to the Noise Ordinance requirements, to reduce the noise impact of construction on nearby residences, only the low noise impact work such as that listed below, will be permitted on Saturdays from 9:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.:
 - A. Surveying and layout.
 - B. Testing and tensioning P. T. (post tensioned) cables, requiring only hydraulic equipment (no cable cutting allowed).
 - C. Other ancillary tasks to construction activities will include site security, surveillance, monitoring, and maintenance of weather protecting, water dams and heating equipment.
- 9) In addition to the Noise Ordinance, requirements to reduce the noise impact of construction on nearby properties, all construction activities shall be limited to the following:
 - A. Non-holiday weekdays between 7:00 A.M and 6:00 P.M.
 - B. Non-holiday weekdays between 6:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M limited to quieter activities based on a DPD approved mitigation plan and public notice program outlined in the plan.
 - C. Saturdays between 9:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. limited to quieter activities based on a DPD approved mitigation plan and public notice program outlined in the plan.
 - D. Emergencies or work which must be done to coincide with street closures, utility interruptions or other similar necessary events, limited to quieter activities based on a DPD approved mitigation plan and public notice program outlined in the plan.
- 10) Large (greater than two-axle) trucks will be prohibited from entering or exiting the site after 3:30 PM.
- 11) Non-noisy activities, such as site security, monitoring, and weather protection shall not be limited by this condition.

Compliance with all applicable conditions must be verified and approved by the Land Use Planner, Bruce Rips, (206-615-1392) at the specified development stage, as required by the Director's decision. The Land Use Planner shall determine whether the condition requires submission of additional documentation or field verification to assure that compliance has been achieved.

Signature: (signature on file)
Bruce P. Rips, AAIA, AICP
Department of Planning and Development

Date: February 21, 2013