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

Application Number: 3015411

Applicant Name: Julian Weber

Address of Proposal: 2302 15th Ave S

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow one two-unit townhouse and two single-family residences (for a total of four residential units) in an environmentally critical area. Existing single family residence and detached garage to be demolished.

The following approvals are required:

SEPA Determination: [ ] Exempt [X] DNS [ ] MDNS [ ] EIS

[ ] DNS with conditions

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

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Site and Project Description

The site is located at the northeast corner of 15th Ave S and S College St on a 6,000-square-foot lot. The lot is approximately 120 feet east to west and 50 wide north to south. The lot is zoned Lowrise 2 (LR2), as are the lots to the north, south. To the west of 15th Ave S the zoning is Lowrise 3 (LR2). To the east of the alley along the east property line the zoning is single-family (SF5000). The lot contains an existing single-family residence constructed in 1901. This house is situated in the eastern half of the lot and has approximately 1,580 square feet of living spacing within two stories. There is a dilapidated bunker-style garage in the far northeast corner of the property.

During the pre-application site visit by DPD's site inspector, a small Geologic Hazard Area was identified on the northeast corner of the property. This area is a landslide-prone areas as defined by SMC 25.09.020.A.3.b(5). The applicant submitted a Geotechnical Engineering Report prepared by Chien-Lin Chen of Pan GEO, Inc, dated May 20th, 2013. This report provided an opinion that the steep slope area was created through previous grading activities, likely associated with the construction of S College St, the bunker garage in the northeast corner of the property, and the alley along the east property line. Seattle DPD's geotechnical reviewer examined this report and concurred with the conclusion that the site qualifies for the limited Steep Slope Exemption Criteria described in SMC 25.09.180 B2b, which eliminates the need for an ECA Steep Slope Area Variance to develop in the steep slope area.

The applicant is proposing construction a two-unit townhouse and two single-family residences (four residential units in total). The footprint each single-family residence and townhouse unit will have a 632-square-foot foot print with three levels of living space plus a roof-top deck. The total footprint of the four structures will be 2,528 square feet. Parking for four vehicles will be provided at the east side of the lot, which will be accessed from the alley. The proposal will meet all zoning standards for developments in Lowrise 2 (L2) zones.

Public Comment

Notice of the proposal was provided on June 27th, 2013, and ended July 10th, 2013. No public comments were received.

SEPA ANALYSIS

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant and dated June 10th, 2103. The information in that checklist, associated plans and reports, public comment, and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and decision.

The project site is located in an environmentally critical area (landslide-prone area) and, therefore, the application is not exempt from SEPA review. However, SMC 25.05.908.B provides that the scope of environmental review of projects within critical areas shall be limited to: 1) Documenting whether the proposal is consistent with The City of Seattle Regulations for Environmentally Critical Areas, SMC Chapter 25.09; and 2) Evaluating potentially significant impacts on the environmentally critical area resources not adequately addressed in The City of Seattle Environmentally Critical Areas Policies or the requirements of SMC Chapter 25.09, Regulations for Environmentally Critical Areas, including any additional mitigation measures needed to protect the environmentally critical areas in order to achieve consistency with SEPA and other applicable environmental review laws.

The Department of Planning and Development has reviewed and analyzed the environmental checklist submitted by the project applicant, the accompanying project plans, and geotechnical reports, and determined that this action will not result in significant adverse impacts to the environment. Codes and development regulations applicable to this proposed project will provide sufficient mitigation and no further conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665). The following summarizes anticipated short and long term impacts and identifies regulations in place that will mitigate these impacts.

Short-term Impacts

Site grading and preparation for the foundation of the proposed structures will expose soil, leading to increased potential for soil erosion during construction until the site is permanently stabilized by establishment of new vegetation and landscaping. Several adopted codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for the identified impact. The Grading Code (SMC Chapter 22.170) requires that soil erosion control techniques be in place for the duration of the land disturbing activities. The Regulations for Environmentally Critical Areas (SMC Chapter 25.09), with a stated purpose of avoiding adverse environmental impacts, regulate all activities on sites with ECAs. The applicant submitted a Geotechnical Engineering Report prepared by Chien-Lin Chen of Pan GEO, Inc, dated May 20th, 2013. In response to a request for additional information from DPD's geotechnical reviewer, Mr. Chen provided a memo dated August 16th, 2013, which specifically reviews the proposed construction plans for conformance with the geotechnical recommendations in the initial report. The memo also provided a minimal risk statement in accordance with Seattle DPD Director's Rule 18-2011:

> *Provided that project is constructed per the reviewed project plans, it is our opinion that the proposed development will not increase the potential for soil movement; and the risk of damage to the proposed development and to the adjacent properties will be minimal. However, it should be noted that the use of the word "minimal" does not imply "no risk". Any development near or in an environmentally critical area always involves some level of risks.*

The geotechnical reports and the construction plans for the proposal have been reviewed by the DPD geotechnical reviewer and found to be in compliance with the City's standards for development on sites with geologic hazard areas. While typical temporary construction-related impacts are expected, these impacts are not considered significant because they are temporary and/or minor in scope (SMC 25.05.794). Therefore, no further conditioning pursuant to SEPA policies is warranted.

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 due to the relatively minor contribution of greenhouse gas emissions from this project.

Long-term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are anticipated as a result of approval of this proposal including: increased surface water runoff due to greater site coverage by impervious surfaces; increased demand for public services and utilities; loss of plant and animal habitat; and increased light and glare.

Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for the identified impacts. Specifically these are: the Environmentally Critical Areas Regulations; the Stormwater Code, Grading Code; the City Energy Code; 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 long term impacts. Therefore, no further conditioning is warranted by SEPA policies.

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 due to the relatively minor contribution of greenhouse gas emissions from this project.

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 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).

CONDITIONS

None required.

Signature: (signature on file) Date: December 2, 2013
Seth Amrhein, Senior Environmental Analyst
Department of Planning and Development

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