City of Seattle
Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Department of Planning & Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

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

Application Number: 3016271

Applicant Name: Adam Newman, Integrus Architecture

Address of Proposal: 611 East Howell Street

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow a 5-story structure containing 20 residential units. No parking is proposed. Existing single family residence to be demolished.

The following approval is required:

Administrative Design Review - Chapter 23.41, (SMC) including departures from development standards:

1. SMC 23.45.518 - Front Setback
2. SMC 23.45.518 - Side Setbacks
3. SMC 23.45.518 - Side Setbacks above 42 feet

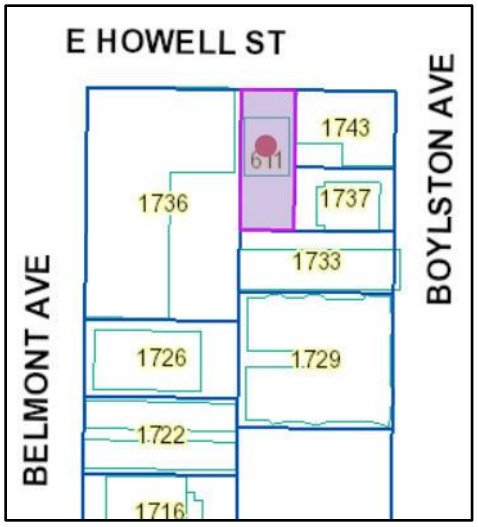
SEPA DETERMINATION: [X] Exempt [ ] DNS [ ] MDNS [ ] EIS*

[ ] DNS with conditions

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

BACKGROUND DATA

Site Location:



The site is zoned Midrise (MR) and is located in the Capitol Hill Urban Center Village. Midrise zoning extends for one and one half to two blocks in all directions. The narrow, rectangular lot measures 35 feet wide by 91 feet long; 3,185 square feet. There is an existing two story, single family house on the lot with parking in the rear. The lot slopes up to the rear of the lot from Howell to the south property line. A substantial retaining wall runs along the west edge of the property line. A wrought iron fence extends along the front of the house and along the west property line. The fence along the front of the property is located in the public right of way.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

Surrounding development is a mix of midrise apartment buildings and turn-of-the-century single family homes many of which have been repurposed for multifamily use. The property borders on two lots, east and west, with masonry apartment buildings, built in the 1920's, which occupy over half of their respective sites and which were built to their property lines or with very small setbacks. The main entry to the neighboring building to the east faces onto Boylston Avenue and a secondary entry on East Howell Street. The entry to the neighboring building to the west is located on Belmont Avenue. The building to the west is configured to have a large courtyard in the southeast corner of the site. Much of this courtyard abuts the subject site. A very large deciduous tree provides a significant branch and leaf canopy at 30 to 40 feet above ground. The tree is spreading and branches extend over the subject site. The tree is located on property more than 10 feet lower than the subject property. The site is located in the Capitol Hill Urban Center. Access to the site is currently via an ingress and egress easement over the property to the south via Boylston Avenue North. There are no mapped Environmentally Critical Areas on the site.

Project materials are available online by entering the project number at this website: http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp. Project materials are also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000 Seattle, WA 98124-4019 or PRC@seattle.gov.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project proposal is to build a 20 unit apartment building with an entry courtyard and private rear courtyard. A partial roof deck is proposed on the north side of the building facing East Howell Street. No parking is required at this location and no parking is proposed.

The project proponents applied for a voluntary Administrative Design Review process as described in Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) in chapter SMC 23.41.016. The assigned planner met with the design team and developer on May 13, 2014 to hear the concept proposals,

opportunities and constraints of the project site. The group discussed massing options, height options, unit count options, parking options, entry sequencing, unit types and open space configuration, hierarchy and purposes. The planner brought up privacy questions for the residents, uses and services, exterior materials, and transparent screening options.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Several public comment letters were received. Issues and concerns focused on the project size, number of units, location on the site, parking, and loss of the single family structure. Some letters commended the new development as a benefit to the block to control undesirable site activities and to provide a quality living experience in a dense Seattle neighborhood.

Early design guidance was prepared and sent to the applicant.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the planner provides the following siting and design guidance.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE June 2, 2014
SEATTLE DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES AND CAPITOL HILL NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines identified by the Planner as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. For the full text please visit the Design Review website.

CONTEXT & SITE

CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features: Use natural systems/features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.
CS1-C Topography. Use natural topography and desirable landforms to inform project design. Use the existing site topography when locating structures and open spaces on the site.

> *Create a design which uses the sloping lot to advantage. Use the slope and building program in concert to ensure the building gracefully meets the street grade, provides mechanical and storage space. The site grade should meet existing grade at the rear property line.*

CS2 Urban Pattern and Form: Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.
CS2-A Location in the City and Neighborhood. Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly.

This building will present the only front facade on the block at this location. Create a meaningful and recognizable façade and entry for residents and visitors alike. Create a sophisticated architectural presence for this mid-block, small site.

CS2-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces. Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and public realm. Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces.

Explore connections to the street while incorporating safety and security. Create opportunities to maintain light and air, prospect and refuge. Incorporate the neighboring open space and large tree into the rear open space design.

CS2-C Relationship to the Block. Look to the uses and scales of adjacent buildings for clues about how to design a mid-block building. Continue a strong street-edge and respond to datum lines of adjacent buildings at the first three floors.

Continue exploring front setback and open space options to best situate this mid-block building. Consider datum lines of the adjacent buildings as point or counterpoint design elements. That is, create a new façade composition between two old facades.

CS2-D Height, Bulk, and Scale. Review the height, bulk, and scale of neighboring buildings as well as the scale of development anticipated by zoning for the area to determine an appropriate complement and/or transition. Use changes in topography, site shape, and vegetation or structures to help make a successful fit with adjacent properties.

Review the programmatic needs with the neighboring height, bulk and scale to create a reasonable fit for the proposal.

CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes. Create compatibility between new projects, and existing architectural context, including historic and modern designs, through building articulation, scale and proportion, roof forms, detailing, fenestration, and/or the use of complementary materials. Explore how contemporary designs can contribute to the development of attractive new forms and architectural styles; as expressed through use of new materials or other means.

Continue in the direction the project is exploring. Consider borrowing a material from existing buildings to use with this building. Opt for authentic and quality materials. Use the existing retaining wall, if possible, in the new development. Consider a fence for security, but open enough for transparency, light and air.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

CS3-I Architectural Concept and Consistency. Incorporate signage that is consistent with the existing or intended character of the building and neighborhood. Use materials and design that are compatible with the structures in the vicinity if those represent the neighborhood character.

Present a quality signage concept. Consider area materials to link to other background buildings. Propose a significant reference to the neighboring nonagenarian structures.

PUBLIC LIFE

PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.
PL3-A Entries. Design the entry as a collection of coordinated elements including the door(s), overhead features, ground surface, landscaping, lighting, and other features.
PL3-B Residential Edges. Provide security and privacy for residential buildings through the use of a buffer or semi-private space between the development and the street or neighboring buildings. Privacy and security issues are particularly important in buildings with ground-level housing, both at entries and where windows are located overlooking the street. Provide opportunities for interaction among residents and neighbors.

Create a well-articulated and restrained entry sequence, residential edge, and sidewalk connection. Use simple architectural elements to address opportunities for public life to be supported in this small space.

DESIGN CONCEPT

DC2 Architectural Concept: Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.
DC2-AMassing. Arrange the mass of the building taking into consideration the characteristics of the site and the proposed uses of the building and its open space.
DC2-BArchitectural and Facade Composition. Design all building facades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all facades are attractive and well-proportioned.
DC2-CSecondary Architectural Features. Add depth to facades where appropriate by incorporating secondary elements into the façade design. Consider architectural features that can be dual purpose— adding depth, texture, and scale as well as serving other project functions.
DC2-DScale and Texture. Incorporate architectural features, elements, and details that are of human scale into the building facades, entries, retaining walls, courtyards, and exterior spaces in a manner that is consistent with the overall architectural concept

Design a quality, simple, and elegant midrise building by fully exploring a strong concept and testing each material transition and space making element to that concept.

DC3 Open Space Concept: Integrate open space design with the building design so that they complement each other.
DC3-BOpen Space Uses and Activities Plan the size, uses, activities, and features of each open space to meet the needs of expected users, ensuring each space has a purpose and function. Design common and private open spaces in multifamily projects for use by all residents to encourage physical activity and social interaction.

Create a good entry open space with areas to pause or sit. Fully design the rear open space for the apartment community and the units at the ground level. Design the rooftop open space for potential residents. For instance consider planters, dog area, weather protection, outdoor seating and dining, bocce, fireplace, art space, weather station.

DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.

DC4-A Exterior Elements and Finishes 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. Select durable and attractive materials that will age well in Seattle's climate, taking special care to detail corners, edges, and transitions.

Submit a materials board to show exterior material choices. Detail each material transition for durability and design intent. Show these transition details. Consider expanding the steel channels to create a more robust "frame" for the burned cedar. Allow the steel channel to extend beyond the cedar a couple of inches. Upgrade to above average quality material choices as much as possible for this highly visible project.

Show suggestions for movable screening for the lower two levels that would allow air to penetrate, but provide privacy screening for residents.

Create a design for the upper level deck. Explore more complete detailing of the upper level north façade. Carry the level of detail found on the ground plane to that entry/exit in a restrained and perfectly detailed approach.

DC4-CLighting. Use lighting both to increase site safety in all locations used by pedestrians and to highlight architectural or landscape details and features such as entries, signs, canopies, plantings, and art. Design project lighting based upon the uses on and off site, taking care to provide illumination to serve building needs while avoiding off-site night glare and light pollution.

Submit a lighting plan and fixture cut sheets to show the project lighting concept. Show more detailed uses of the suggested fixtures in the design review packet and explore a few specialty fixtures at key points. Consider some fixtures to be blending and others contrasting to punctuate an area, pathway or use.

DC4-DTrees, Landscape, and Hardscape Materials. Reinforce the overall architectural and open space design concepts through the selection of landscape materials. Use exterior courtyards, plazas, and other hard surfaced areas as an opportunity to add color, texture, and/or pattern and enliven public areas through the use of distinctive and durable paving materials. Use permeable materials wherever possible.

Use the full range of landscape materials to create a quality building, and landscape. Create a balance of hardscape and landscape with full and striving planting. Use primarily native plants in designerly compositions. Use plants to solve design problems of screening, softening, way-finding and gardenscape. Create a communal backyard amenity space for residents while providing screening for the residents on the first two floors.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

At the time of the Early Design Guidance the following departures were requested:

1. **Front setback (SMC 23.45.518 B):** The Code requires a 7 foot average setback with a 5 foot minimum setback. The applicant proposes no setback for one linear foot and a three foot setback for the building façade length of 25 feet.

Staff is favorable to the zero setback for the building code required wall and favorable to the reduced setback at the building façade if the setback area is designed with quality, "transparent" plant screening.

2. **Side setback (SMC 23.45.518 B):** The Code requires a 7 foot average setback with a 5 foot minimum setback. The applicant proposes zero side setback along the east property line.

Staff is favorable to the zero setback for the building along the east property line. There are no windows on the neighboring building at this location. Quality materials on the front and west façade will be even more important at this location.

3. **Side setback (SMC 23.45.518 B):** The Code requires that for portions of a structure over 42 feet in height a 10 foot average setback and 7 foot minimum setback is required. The applicant proposes a 9 foot minimum and average setback for the full height of the structure. The upper 15 to 18 feet of the building represent the departure request.

Staff is favorable to the upper setback departure.

MASTER USE PERMIT APPLICATION

Staff directed the applicant to develop the building design and call the planner for an interim meeting prior to submitting the Master Use Permit. The applicant applied for a Master Use Permit on July 31, 2014. The applicant and the planner met and discussed the project proposal, had discussion on material choices, and discussed the project siting and design departure proposals. The applicant worked with Seattle City Light to meet their electrical clearance requirements. A design review recommendation package was submitted to the planner.

RECOMMENDATION January 5, 2015

PROJECT DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The project design was further developed to respond to City codes, planner, and public comments. The applicant met with the assigned planner to discuss public comment, design issues and departure requests. The project proponents outlined how the project relates to guidance given at the early design guidance stage. Project documents are available to view at the 20th floor Public Resource Counter and the project file at http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/.

In response to early guidance and ensuing iterative design efforts the project has made improvements to better meet the early guidance. Changes since the initial design proposal include the following:

- The grasscrete-type paving has been replaced with a warm red-orange porous brick.
- Corrugated steel siding has been dropped from the project proposal.
- The two cement composite board choices have been modified to lighter color choices.
- The upper level open space has been redesigned to better fit with the main Howell Street façade by using several materials, better lighting, an awning over the door, and landscaping.

The project design has been updated for a better fit with the neighboring buildings (CS2-C). The building design responds to the site topography (CS1-C) by burying some of the building mechanical and storage functions to the rear of the site where the topography rises. The applicant is proposing a recognizable and well lit entry on Howell (DC4-C). The project concept is interesting with a strong, but not overwhelming, architectural presence to fit with the neighboring equally strong concept buildings. (CS2-A) The project meets the street with a site entry that is designed for security, but also to be viewed from the sidewalk (CS2-B). The materials, site furniture, and lighting design create a sense of community at the intersection of the project entry and the public realm. The rear open space is located at the same general area of neighboring open spaces on both sides and the lot to the rear. The neighboring tree is visible from this project's courtyard (CS2-B). The project setback departures help the project better meet guidance CS2-B by allowing for a useable walkway along one side of the building and a courtyard for residents at the rear of the building.

The building is a modern interpretation of the city apartment building. The windows are not punched through the building wall, but become part of the wall as floor to ceiling windows for each unit. Vertical elements like shutters of the Mission Inn are exaggerated in the charred cedar siding of the project proposal. Interstitial space is slated to be a light-colored, less expensive, cement panel board. Operable sliding windows and large glass will give a sense of lightness to the project facades. The neighboring Granada building has brick façades; both finish brick on the Howell street façade and a secondary rustic brick on the east, lot line façade of the building. The location of the brick material in the proposed project will not compete with the existing brick of the Granada, but carry the warm colored material to the ground plane. The brick helps create a compatible relationship through materials choice and location.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

<u>Summary of requested development standard departures</u>

Recommendations on departures are based upon the departure's potential to help the project better meet design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure. The applicant has requested, and revised from early submittals, departures from the Land Use Code development standards.

1. **Front setback (SMC 23.45.518 B):** The Code requires a 7 foot average setback with a 5 foot minimum setback. The applicant proposes a setback of 3 feet for one linear foot.

2. **Side setback (SMC 23.45.518 B):** The Code requires a 7 foot average setback with a 5 foot minimum setback. The applicant proposes one foot side set back along the east property line for the height of the building. This request relates to the next request for setbacks over 42 feet.

3. **Side setback (SMC 23.45.518 B):** The Code requires that for portions of a structure over 42 feet in height a 10 foot average setback and 7 foot minimum setback is required. The applicant proposes a 9 foot minimum and average setback above 42 feet for the structure along the west property line and a one foot minimum and average setback above 42 feet along the east property line.

RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation summarized below is based on the design review packets received by the applicant and located in the public file for this project. The project file may be accessed on line at http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/ or at the Public Resource Center located on floor 20 of the Seattle Municipal Tower. Staff recommends approving the project and development standard departure requests.

DIRECTOR'S ANALYSIS AND DECISION – ADMINISTRATIVE DESIGN REVIEW

The Director has reviewed the *Seattle Design Review guidelines* and *Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Review Guidelines* and approves this design. The Director agrees with the conditions recommended by staff and the recommendations to approve the design, as stated above.

CONTEXT & SITE

The project uses the site topography as a starting point for building design (CS1-C). A portion of the building storage and mechanical needs are tucked into the basement where the grade rises to allow residential units to be located on the street front. An entry is located approximately where the grade rises to create a central vertical circulation core which also does not use up street frontage for circulation. The designers studied area buildings and especially the neighboring buildings for design cues as a palette for a modern building. The proposed design strengthens the street pattern by presenting an interesting contemporary façade, which, in a modern idiom, is sympathetic to its context (CS2-A). The façade exhibits the same elements of the neighboring buildings; windows, siding or primary construction material, vertical elements, lighting, entries, landscaping, and signage. The façade has substantial glazing and large operable windows to create a strong connection to the street and public realm (CS2-B). As noted above the vertical elements of the neighboring shutters are recalled in the charred wood siding. Extra large windows are appropriate for the façades and brick used on the ground plane provides a warm and weathered surface. The project proponents have asked for development standard departures to create an entry that helps maintain light and air to the building to the west and creates a strong connection to the public sidewalk for pedestrians (CS2-B). The departures for side setbacks (departure requests two and three above) provide building residents, visitors, and passersby an intimate and original entry courtyard. The building design will give more space next to neighboring building windows. The building creates a strong street–edge with large windows, interesting façade materials, and a recognizable entry. The proposed building responds to datum

lines of the adjacent buildings (CS2-C). The proposal responds to height, bulk and scale of the neighboring buildings by building under the allowed height of the zone and stepping back at the upper level to visually ease the sense of height at the street façade (CS2-D). The proposed design is using a modern idiom with old materials such as large windows, brick paving on the ground plane, charred cedar siding and cement board and steel. The project is using the neighboring concrete wall and buttresses as part of the entry design (CS3-A, CS3-I, DC3-B).

PUBLIC LIFE

The entry courtyard is visible to the public, provides a sense of safety for the residents and has a good street level interaction with creative signage and lighting (PL3-A, PL3-B, DC4-C). Creating a quality, entry courtyard helps create better street level interactions and connections (PL3-A, B), and massing and building composition (DC2 A-B).

DESIGN CONCEPT

The modern loft design concept is carried out throughout the proposal from unit design, window design, siding unitization, wrought iron, steel and other high quality material choices, landscape design, and paving design. Familiar building elements are used on a scale that may be bigger or smaller than expected for recognition and surprise (DC2-A-D, DC-4A). Open space design is used as semi-private entry space and as private rear yard space (DC3-B). Additional landscaping has been proposed to soften the edges of the street at the property line, (DC4-D) create façade interest, (DC2-B, C and D) and to create a sense of privacy for the Mission Inn sidewalk entry (CS2-B and C). Lower quality, less expensive materials on the east and west façades are somewhat varied and have been modified to lighter color choices in response to comments (DC4-A).

<u>Capitol Hill Neighborhood Priority Design Issues</u>

Important design issues are listed in the *Capitol Hill Design Guidelines.* The proposed project addresses the design issues and meets many design priority guidelines. The proposed project will augment the neighborhood architectural quality by means of its contemporary design with familiar materials. The project will provide studio living with rooftop and at-grade garden open space as an alternative choice of living accommodation in the Capitol Hill neighborhood. The project will reinforce human scale, architectural quality and is compatible with the surroundings. Decorative and high quality materials are proposed and no curb cut for vehicle access is proposed.

The proposal will strengthen Capitol Hill urban forms and street patterns. The sidewalk width will be retained and will seem wider by removing existing elements that are in the right of way (CS2 I i). A street tree will be added with full planter strip landscaping (CS21 ii). No vehicle entrance interrupts the pedestrian zone (CS2 I iii). The building entry is enhanced with high quality signage, varied lighting, and quality paving to welcome residents and visitors (PL2 I i; PL2 II i, iii). Enhanced personal safety in the area is addressed with large windows on the street and small patios (PL2 III i). Vehicle access is via an existing easement at the rear of the site (DC1 I). Dumpsters and service is screened (DC1 II). The project design provides usable, attractive, well-integrated open space (DC3 I i, ii, vi,). The proposed residential project uses durable and maintainable materials, wood siding and brick (DC4 II).

After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reviewing the previously identified design priorities, applicable design priorities and reviewing the materials, the Director determines that the project has satisfactorily responded to the early design guidance. The Director **approves** the proposed project and grants the requested departures.

DECISION – Design Review

The application is **CONDFITIONALLY GRANTED.**

CONDITIONS – Design Review

For the life of the project

1. Maintain the charred cedar siding (shou-sugi ban) on the front façade and wrap the same material around to the west side of the building at the first level as shown in the project documents. Retain the large windows as shown in the plan documents and brick paving at the entry to provide originality and connection to neighboring building elements, brick, window shutters, and large windows.

Signature: (signature on file) Date: February 5, 2015
Holly J. Godard , Senior Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ISSUANCE OF YOUR MASTER USE PERMIT

Master Use Permit Expiration and Issuance

The appealable land use decision on your Master Use Permit (MUP) application has now been published. At the conclusion of the appeal period, your permit will be considered "approved for issuance". (If your decision is appealed, your permit will be considered "approved for issuance" on the fourth day following the City Hearing Examiner's decision.) Projects requiring a Council land use action shall be considered "approved for issuance" following the Council's decision.

The "approved for issuance" date marks the beginning of the **three year life** of the MUP approval, whether or not there are outstanding corrections to be made or pre-issuance conditions to be met. The permit must be issued by DPD within that three years or it will expire and be cancelled. (SMC 23-76-028) (Projects with a shoreline component have a **two year life**. Additional information regarding the effective date of shoreline permits may be found at 23.60.074.)

All outstanding corrections must be made, any pre-issuance conditions met and all outstanding fees paid before the permit is issued. You will be notified when your permit has issued.

Questions regarding the issuance and expiration of your permit may be addressed to the Public Resource Center at prc@seattle.gov or to our message line at 206-684-8467.