



**City of Seattle**  
Edward B. Murray, Mayor

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**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:** 3017093  
**Applicant Name:** Lucas Branham with Studio Meng Strazzara Architects for GRE  
**Address of Proposal:** 1516 NW 51<sup>st</sup> Street

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Land Use Application to allow a 6-story, 90 unit residential building with a 500 sq. ft. live-work unit located at ground level. Parking for 35 vehicles will be located on the site. Existing structures to be demolished.

The following approvals are required:

**Design Review** – Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Chapter 23.41 with the following Development Standard Departure:

1. Residential Building Setback – To allow a portion of a structure containing a residential use with a side lot line abutting a lot in a residential zone encroach in a required setback. (SMC 23.47A.014.B.3)

**SEPA - Environmental Determination** (SMC Chapter 25.05).

**SEPA DETERMINATION:**

Determination of Non-Significance

- No mitigating conditions of approval are imposed.
- Pursuant to SEPA substantive authority provided in SMC 25.06.660, the proposal has been conditioned to mitigate environmental impacts

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### Site and Vicinity Description

This approximately 14,270 square foot (sq. ft.) proposal site is located in the Ballard neighborhood of Seattle bounded by Northwest 51<sup>st</sup> Street to the south, commercial property to the east and residential properties to the north and west. This urban infill project site is zoned Commercial 1 (C1-65), located in the Ballard Hub Urban Village. It contains a one-story commercial warehouse building with attached carports.



Vehicular access to the parking areas onsite is via two separate curb cuts abutting Northwest 51<sup>st</sup> Street. Northwest 51<sup>st</sup> Street is classified as a non-arterial street, pursuant to SMC Chapter 23.53. This street is improved with sidewalks, curbs, street trees and gutters.

The site's existing topography is relatively level and slopes moderately downward to the south and characterized with have grades descending approximately 7.5' from north to south. There are no Environmentally Critical Areas (ECAs) mapped on or adjacent to the site.

A mix of lawn, shrubs and a mature tree (Sawara Cypress, *Chamaecyparis pisifera*) are located on the property. This tree has been determined by a qualified tree professional (Sue Nicol, ISA Certified Arborist) as not meeting the "Exceptional Tree" designation per Director's Rule (DR) 16-2008. The DPD Tree Expert has reviewed the Landscape Architect's written assessment dated April 1, 2014 concurred with these findings.

Surrounding property north, east and south are also zoned Commercial 1 (C1-65). The property west of the project site is zoned Lowrise 3 (LR3). Industrial zoning is found one block southeast of the site. Surrounding development includes a mix of townhouse developments, apartment buildings and single family residences north, south and west of the subject property. Commercial uses (retail, office, car wash) are south and east of the of the project property.

It is a very eclectic and diverse neighborhood. The general character of this block along Northwest 51st Street is predominately residential in nature to the west of the site. The neighborhood is moderately pedestrian-oriented due to its proximity to multiple commercial businesses (retail, restaurants, grocery stores, etc.) and King County Metro bus stops concentrated along 15th Avenue Northwest (major Arterial Street): all within walking distance of the site. A hospital campus (Swedish Ballard Medical Center) is located two blocks northwest of the site.

### Proposal Description

The proposed project is for the design and construction of a mixed-use commercial/residential building with approximately 90 residential units above one ground-level live-work unit. All parking for the proposed development (approximately 35 stalls) to be provided in an at-grade garage accessed via the street (Northwest 51<sup>st</sup> Street). The existing commercial structure and attached carports will be demolished.

Grading of approximately 1,500 cubic yards (cu. yds.) of material is anticipated to occur during the removal of material and construction of the structure's foundation.

### Public Comments

Some members of the public attended the Early Design Guidance (EDG) meeting held on May 12, 2014. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Excited that the design will include vehicular parking onsite.
- Asked about the typical residential unit's type and square footage.
- Encouraged a design that includes energy efficient "green" features that are sustainable.

Some members of the public attended the Final Recommendation (REC) meeting held on December 8, 2014. The following comments were offered:

- Pleased that the treatment (finish) of the proposed exterior cedar siding material will be applied in a manner that will enhance the design and be sustainable over time.
- Requested more exterior lighting be added to the design to enhance pedestrian security without increasing light pollution for the surrounding area.
- A representative of the Ballard Partnership for Safe Growth Urban Design Transportation Committee:
  - Excited about many aspects of the project that enhance the pedestrian experience-lighting, open space, landscaping, sightlines, setbacks.
  - Discouraged a design that is similar in appearance (orange and gray color combination) to the Shurgard Storage building near the Ballard Bridge.
- Disappointed that the proposal didn't include more onsite parking.
- Asked if bicycle parking was proposed.

The SEPA public comment period for this project originally ended on July 9, 2014 and was later renoticed as a revised application which resulted in an additional public comment period ending November 16, 2014. DPD received written comments from the public during both public comment periods. The neighbors voiced concerns regarding inadequate onsite green space at grade and parking/traffic impacts in the immediate neighborhood. (See discussion regarding parking impacts in the SEPA analysis, below.)

### DESIGN REVIEW ANALYSIS

#### **EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: May 12, 2014**

Three alternative design schemes were presented to the Board. Additionally, the architect's presentation included visual information (site photos, design option enhancements, material and color palette, etc.) that was not included in the EDG design packets initially provided to the Board. The project team's development stated goals were to create a residential/commercial "modern warehouse box with large glazed openings" building proposal that will be designed in context with the distinguished character of the surrounding neighborhood in architectural elements. All three options included a six-story structure with 80 residential units and upper-level outdoor residential amenity areas above a residential lobby/office/indoor amenity area, a live-work unit and onsite parking at grade. Vehicular access to the enclosed 40 parking stalls was proposed to occur from Northwest 51<sup>st</sup> Street.

The first scheme (Option 1) described as the "shifted box" code-compliant option, showed the building's upper floor massing pushed to the site's easternmost boundary line. The vehicular entrance to the enclosed ground level parking garage was proposed at the east end of the property with the live-work unit and residential entrance shifted to the central and west end of the property respectively.

The second scheme (Option 2) was labeled as the “Setback Urban Infill” option. This scheme showed upper level massing centrally sited on a podium base with some massing shifted to the site’s north property line. The ground-level vehicular garage entrance is planned at the west end of the proposed structure. This design would also not require a code departure.

The third and applicant preferred scheme (Option 3) was described as an “Urban Infill” option. This scheme massing was similar to the second scheme with the exclusion of the massing shifted towards the north boundary line. This design option emphasized minor horizontal modulation at the upper level wall facades (north, south and east). This design would necessitate a design departure for residential setback.

### **Meeting Materials:**

The design packets submitted to the DPD Land Use Planner prior to each Design Review meeting included materials presented at the EDG and Final Recommendation meetings. They are available online by entering the project number (3017093) at this website:  
[http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design\\_Review\\_Program/Project\\_Reviews/Reports/default.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp)  
or by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

**Mailing Public Resource Center**  
**Address:** 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000  
P.O. Box 34019  
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

**Email:** [PRC@seattle.gov](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

## **PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS**

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance.

### **EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE: May 12, 2014**

- 1. Design Concept, Consistency and Massing:** The design of the new building should respond to specific site conditions, establish a positive context, respect adjacent properties and represent an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design.
  - a. The Board felt that key information wasn’t provided in the design packets and was disappointed that no design schemes that illustrated alternative podium options were offered for the Board’s review. As a result, the Board debated the merits of requesting additional schemes at an additional EDG meeting. Ultimately, the Board suggested the preferred design scheme Option 3 should move forward to the Master Use Permit (MUP) submittal with the following guidance:
    - i. The Board expressed support of the “modern warehouse box with large glazed openings” design concept presented by the applicant and noted that that the design would establish a positive context in a neighborhood where the architectural character is evolving. However, the Board voiced strong concerns about how the height, bulk and scale of the podium base lot-line-to-lot-line, the central placement of the upper massing and minimal modulation detract from the aforementioned design concept and establishing a continuous strong street edge. (CS2.A.1, CS2.A.2, CS2.C.2, CS2.D.3, CS2.D.4, CS2.D.5)

- ii. The Board understood that the design of the upper massing is predicated on a daylighting strategy to maximize access to light and air to the residential units. The Board questioned if the amount of fenestration illustrated for the preferred design concept in the design packet will meet applicable energy code requirements. The Board expects the applicant to demonstrate that this concern has been addressed at the Recommendation meeting. (CS1.A.1, CS1.B.2, CS1.B.3)
- iii. The Board acknowledged that the project site is a mid-block property where no continuous street-edge is present and commented that the new development should establish an appropriate datum line that responds to the neighboring buildings and establishes a desirable context for future development. (CS2.C.2, CS3.A.4)
- iv. The Board stated concern with the monolithic appearance of the building's south-facing façade abutting Northwest 51<sup>st</sup> Street.

It is important that the Board understands more clearly how the design has been developed to the presented architectural design concept (“modern warehouse box with large glazed openings”) that will result in a cohesive design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings. At the Recommendation meeting, the Board expects to review a design that focuses on modulation that effectively establishes a third or fourth story scale for the building and/or modulation that projects from a simple planned mass and provides relief from a simple massing. Effective use of secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived massing is requested. The Board cautioned a second Recommendation meeting may be necessary if these concerns aren't addressed. (DC2.A, DC2.B, DC2.C.1)

- b. It is imperative that the design be respectful to adjacent properties, particularly the neighboring residential properties to the north and the west. The Board commented that detailed analysis of the adjacent properties and their functionality requirements needs to be explored further. The Board expects the applicant to explain and demonstrate how the new building will respond to those adjacency pressures (i.e. privacy, light, outdoor activities, etc.). Providing a cross elevation to the overall overlay of the existing residential buildings' elevations with the proposed design to illustrate how they juxtapose was noted by the Board as one method to illustrate how the design meets this guidance. (CS2.D.4, CS2.D.5, PL3.B.1)
  - c. The Board acknowledged that blank walls visible at the ground level will need to be addressed. The Board expects to review details pertaining to any landscaping (green screening) or design treatments proposed to address this concern at the Recommendation meeting. (DC1.C.2, DC2.B.2)
  - d. The applicant explained that onsite parking is not required for the commercial/residential proposal. The Board appreciated that the proposal included onsite parking and encouraged the applicant to continue to include onsite parking as the project evolves its design with the guidance provided. (DC1.C.1, DC1.C.2)
- 2. Northwest 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue Street Frontage:** The building design should incorporate features that encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges and reinforce the spatial characteristics of Northwest 51<sup>st</sup> Street.
- a. At the Recommendation meeting, the Board expects to review an ensemble of elements (doors, garage entrance, canopies, hardscape, landscaping, glazing, etc.) that

- encourage interest and activity at the street-level and clarify building entries/edges. (PL3.A.4, PL3.B.3)
- b. The Board understood that the building massing was sited in a manner to accommodate the code-required setbacks due to the proximity of the residential zone adjacent to the west property line. The Board observed that the grade-level area located at the site's southwest corner would create a void along the public way and stated that this space should have a purpose. The Board also stated that this area would be an opportunity to create an open space for the benefit of the public and the residents and asked that this concept be explored. At the Recommendation meeting, the Board expects to review a design that incorporates design elements (visitor bike parking, etc.) and architectural features appropriate for the void along the public way that would create interest at street-level, is designed for pedestrians and achieves a successful fit with the neighboring residential property to the west. The Board commented that it could support a future code departure request to allow for portions of the building mass to encroach into the setback in order to better address this concern and also address potential safety and security concerns appropriately. (PL2.B, DC1.C.2, DC2.A.1, DC2.B.2, DC2.C.1)
  - c. Conceptual residential and commercial lighting and signage designs proposed for the building's street facing and surrounding façades should be presented at the Recommendation meeting. (DC4.B, DC4.C)
  - d. The Board supported a design that screened the trash/recycling, utilities and services within the structure and away from the pedestrian right-of-way. The Board stated further analysis of the access by residents and non-residents (trash collection) and review of best practices in terms of trash/recycling removal is necessary. The Board expects a diagrammatic demonstration on the circulation concept for trash access at the Recommendation meeting. (DC1.C.4)

### **3. Public and Residential Open Spaces:**

- a. At the Recommendation meeting, the Board stated that they expect to see elements (outdoor furniture, trees, landscaping, etc.) included in the landscape design that activate the proposed residential exterior open spaces. (DC3.B.4, DC4.D.4)
- b. The Board encouraged a design that incorporates bike facilities in the public realm. Design elements within the right-of-way are within the purview of the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT). Therefore, the applicant is directed to address this Board request directly with SDOT during the initial MUP review process and provide street improvement design specifics (including landscaping) at the Recommendation meeting. (PL4.B.2, DC4.D.4)
- c. At the EDG meeting, the Board inquired about the status of the existing mature tree (25" Sawara Cypress, *Chamaecyparis pisifera*) on the site. The applicant explained that, prior to the EDG meeting; an arborist had inspected the tree and determined that the aforementioned tree was not deemed an Exceptional Tree. The applicant also confirmed that this tree would not be retained. The Board's expectation is that the applicant will provide feedback from DPD concerning the Exceptional Tree status determination at the Recommendation meeting. (CS1.D.1, DC4.D.4)

## **FINAL RECOMMENDATION MEETING: December 8, 2014**

The design massing scheme presented to the Board was based on the preferred scheme (Option 3) offered at the EDG phase. The preferred massing design had further evolved to encompass information including colors, materials, fenestration, architectural detailing and landscaping.

The building design included a building mass with residential units built above common residential space, a live-work unit and a partially covered parking area at-grade. The Board previously identified concerns regarding the height, bulk and scale of the podium base lot-line-to-lot-line condition; the central placement of the upper massing with minimal modulation; the monolithic appearance of the building's south-facing façade; and the lack of design elements along Northwest 51st Street designated towards the pedestrian had been addressed in the proposed design. The podium base lot-line-to-lot-line condition had been greatly minimized which virtually eliminated the blank wall condition identified at the EDG meeting.

Trash and recycling receptacle storage and staging was presented in the parking garage. The presentation included landscaping design details and amenity spaces throughout the project development site and within the public realm. The presentation also included conceptual lighting and signage information.

A development standard departure associated with residential setback requirements was presented to the Board.

## **FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS: December 8, 2014**

The Board discussed the proposed departure and recommended the departure and condition, as described, following the Design Review Guidelines section.

- 1. Design Concept, Consistency and Massing:** The design of the new building should respond to specific site conditions, establish a positive context, respect adjacent properties and represent an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design.
  - a. The Board reviewed the final building design and appreciated that the design had significantly improved from the EDG meeting resulting in a cohesive design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings. The Board stated that past concerns pertaining to massing, architectural concept and consistency have been resolved. The Board felt that the transition to the neighbors and zone transition to the west was appropriate because the building pulls back from the western property line significantly from what would be allowed in a code compliant scheme. The Board also complimented the designers on the fact that the building is designed on all four sides as it will be viewable from all angles until surrounding properties develop. (CS2.A, CS2.C.2, CS2.D.3, CS2.D.4, CS2.D.5, CS3.A.4, DC2.A, DC2.B, DC2.C.1)
  - b. The Board reviewed the proposed 4' parapet height difference between the east and west perceived massing and felt that the architectural concept would be enhanced if the parapet height would be uniform. Therefore, the Board encouraged the applicant to simplify the parapet height on the final design. (DC2.A.2, DC2.B.1, DC2.C.1)
  - c. At the Recommendation meeting, the Board reviewed the at-grade parking garage area which is partially unenclosed near the building edges and not visible to pedestrians. The Board voiced concerns regarding the safety and security of the parking garage area and debated the merits of the proposed methods (screening, landscaping, and lighting) that were cited to deter undesirable access to the property.

Ultimately, the Board acknowledged that the proposed fencing and landscaping will reduce visual impacts of the exposed parking area: However, the Board commented that securing the parking area is important and that it was in the applicant's interest to resolve this concern effectively. (PL3.B.1, DC1.C.1, DC1.C.2)

- d. The Board reviewed the proposed material and color palette and inquired further about the material color applied to the bolt-on juliet balconies and cedar siding. The Board confirmed that the proposed wood material would be stained to match the color as shown on the physical sample presented to the Board versus the orange hue illustrated on the renderings in the design packet. With the exception of the wood color illustrated in the renderings, the Board stated the future design should adhere to the palette offered in the design packet and the physical samples presented at the Recommendation meeting. (DC4.A)

**2. Northwest 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue Street Frontage:** The building design should incorporate features that encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges and reinforce the spatial characteristics of Northwest 51<sup>st</sup> Street.

- a. The Board reviewed the structure's entries and expressed support of the location of main entrance to the live/work unit. (PL3.B.3)
- b. The Board reviewed the conceptual residential and commercial lighting design and recognized that the lighting design did not adequately address potential pedestrian/occupant security issues in the public realm, at entries and building edges. The Board stated that this site should be well-lit. Therefore, the Board recommended a condition that the lighting plan for the site should be enhanced to provide additional and effective illumination at the following areas: street-facing façade, parking entrance, live-work entry at the east façade, and landscaped southwest corner. Uplighting into the soffit along the south façade and installation of bollard lighting in the landscaped area (southwest corner) were solutions offered by the Board that should be considered. (PL2.B.2, PL3.A.4, DC4.C)
- c. The Board reviewed the design which identified a dedicated trash/recycling room and receptacle queuing area near the vehicular entrance all enclosed within the parking garage. The Board stated that prior concerns pertaining to the screening and access of trash/recycling had been addressed. (DC1.C.4)

**3. Public and Residential Open Spaces:**

- a. The Board was pleased that the final design incorporates bike facilities on the site; and bike facilities/seating in the public realm. The Board was reminded that final approval of proposed design elements within the right-of-way is within the purview of the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT). (PL4.B.2, DC4.D.4)
- b. In the Recommendation design packet, the applicant documented confirmation from an arborist that an existing mature tree (25" Sawara Cypress, *Chamaecyparis pisifera*) on the site is not an "Exceptional Tree" per City standards. The DPD Tree Expert concurred that the Sawara Cypress tree is not Exceptional, but tree replacement would be required per the Tree Protection Ordinance. The applicant's presentation identified two replacement trees onsite. The Board didn't discuss this issue any further at the Recommendation meeting. (CS1.D.1, DC4.D.4)

## DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The Board identified the following Citywide Design Guidelines of highest priority for this project. 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-B Sunlight and Natural Ventilation

**CS1-B-2. Daylight and Shading:** Maximize daylight for interior and exterior spaces and minimize shading on adjacent sites through the placement and/or design of structures on site.

**CS1-B-3. Managing Solar Gain:** Manage direct sunlight falling on south and west facing facades through shading devices and existing or newly planted trees.

**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

**CS2-A-1. Sense of Place:** Emphasize attributes that give a distinctive sense of place. Design the building and open spaces to enhance areas where a strong identity already exists, and create a sense of place where the physical context is less established.

**CS2-A-2. Architectural Presence:** Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly.

#### CS2-C Relationship to the Block

**CS2-C-2. Mid-Block Sites:** 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.

#### CS2-D Height, Bulk, and Scale

**CS2-D-3. Zone Transitions:** For projects located at the edge of different zones, provide an appropriate transition or complement to the adjacent zone(s). Projects should create a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zone and the proposed development.

**CS2-D-4. Massing Choices:** Strive for a successful transition between zones where a project abuts a less intense zone.

**CS2-D-5. Respect for Adjacent Sites:** Respect adjacent properties with design and site planning to minimize disrupting the privacy of residents in adjacent buildings.

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

#### CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes

**CS3-A-4. Evolving Neighborhoods:** In neighborhoods where architectural character is evolving or otherwise in transition, explore ways for new development to establish a positive and desirable context for others to build upon in the future.

### 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

**PL3-A-4. Ensemble of Elements:** 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

**PL3-B-3. Buildings with Live/Work Uses:** Maintain active and transparent facades in the design of live/work residences. Design the first floor so it can be adapted to other commercial use as needed in the future.

## PL4 Active Transportation: Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.

### PL4-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists

**PL4-B-2. Bike Facilities:** Facilities such as bike racks and storage, bike share stations, shower facilities and lockers for bicyclists should be located to maximize convenience, security, and safety.

## DESIGN CONCEPT

## DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

### DC1-C Parking and Service Uses

**DC1-C-2. Visual Impacts:** Reduce the visual impacts of parking lots, parking structures, entrances, and related signs and equipment as much as possible.

**DC1-C-4. Service Uses:** Locate and design service entries, loading docks, and trash receptacles away from pedestrian areas or to a less visible portion of the site to reduce possible impacts of these facilities on building aesthetics and pedestrian circulation.

## 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-A Massing

**DC2-A-2. Reducing Perceived Mass:** Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of larger projects.

### DC2-B Architectural and Facade Composition

**DC2-B-1. Façade 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-B-2. Blank Walls:** Avoid large blank walls along visible façades wherever possible. Where expanses of blank walls, retaining walls, or garage facades are unavoidable, include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians.

### DC2-C Secondary Architectural Features

**DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest:** Add depth to facades where appropriate by incorporating balconies, canopies, awnings, decks, or other secondary elements into the façade design. Add detailing at the street level in order to create interest for the pedestrian and encourage active street life and window shopping (in retail areas).

## DC3 Open Space Concept: Integrate open space design with the building design so that they complement each other.

### DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities

**DC3-B-4. Multifamily Open Space:** Design common and private open spaces in multifamily projects for use by all residents to encourage physical activity and social interaction.

**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**

**DC4-A-1. 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.

**DC4-A-2. Climate Appropriateness:** Select durable and attractive materials that will age well in Seattle's climate, taking special care to detail corners, edges, and transitions.

**DC4-D Trees, Landscape, and Hardscape Materials**

**DC4-D-4. Place Making:** Create a landscape design that helps define spaces with significant elements such as trees.

**DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure were based upon the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure.

1. **Residential Building Setback (SMC 23.47A.014.B.3):** The Code requires a structure containing a residential use with a side lot line abutting a lot in a residential zone be setback as follows:

- a. 15' for portions of structure above 13' in height to a maximum of 40'; and
- b. for each portion of structure above 40' in height, an additional setback at the rate of 2' of setback for every 10' by which the height of such portion exceeds 40'.

The structure's west wall façade is parallel with the side lot abutting property in a residential (LR3) zone. The applicant proposes to maintain the 15' setback for the entire portion of structure above 40' and not provide any additional setback. The applicant explained that the proposed setback distance allows for a façade layout which creates a unified architectural design that will improve and strengthen the character of the neighborhood. The shadow studies offered to the Board indicated that the requested setback departure would not significantly impact day-lighting to the neighboring residential building to the west.

The Board unanimously recommended that DPD grant the requested departure because this departure would result in a design that would better meet the intent of the Design Review Guidelines CS2.D.3, CS2.D.4, CS2.5 and DC2.B.1 by allowing a more cohesive design that is consistent with architectural concept ("modern warehouse box").

**BOARD RECOMMENDATION**

The recommendation summarized above was based on the design review packet dated Monday, December 08, 2014, and the material shown and verbally described by the applicant at the Monday, December 08, 2014 Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, the four Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design and departure with the following condition:

1. The lighting plan for the site should be enhanced to provide additional and effective illumination that will assist in illuminating specific areas (street-facing façade, parking entrance, live-work entry at the east façade, and landscaped southwest corner) to ensure comfort and security for pedestrians, residents and live-work occupant(s). (PL2.B.2, PL3.A.4, DC4.C)

Subsequent to the December 8, 2014 meeting, the applicant has worked with DPD staff to respond to the Design Review Board Recommended Condition as follows:

1. The applicant's plans illustrate the placement of lighting at the live-work entrance at the east façade and the landscaped southwest corner. Additional lighting is identified along the street-facing façade and the parking entrance. This response satisfies recommended condition #1.

The plans on file reflect the updated design and will be included in the issued MUP plan set.

### **ANALYSIS & DECISION – DESIGN REVIEW**

The design review process prescribed in Section 23.41.014.F of the Seattle Municipal Code describing the content of the DPD Director's decision reads in part as follows:

*The Director's decision shall consider the recommendation of the Design Review Board. Except for projects accepted in the Living Building Pilot Program established in Section 23.40.060, if four or more members of the Design Review Board are in agreement in their recommendation to the Director, the Director shall issue a decision that makes compliance with the recommendation of the Design Review Board a condition of permit approval, unless the Director concludes that the recommendation of the Design Review Board:*

- a. Reflects inconsistent application of the design review guidelines; or*
- b. Exceeds the authority of the Design Review Board; or*
- c. Conflicts with SEPA conditions or other regulatory requirements applicable to the site; or*
- d. Conflicts with the requirements of state or federal law.*

### **Director's Analysis:**

Four members of the Northwest Design Review Board were in attendance and provided recommendations to the Director and identified elements of the Design Guidelines which are critical to the project's overall success. The Director must provide additional analysis of the Board's recommendations and then accept, deny or revise the Board's recommendations (SMC 23.41.014.F.3). The Director agrees with and accepts the conditions recommended by the Board that further augment the selected Guidelines.

Following the Recommendation meeting, DPD staff worked with the applicant to update the submitted plans to include the recommendations of the Design Review Board. The Director of DPD has reviewed the decision and recommendations of the Design Review Board made by the four members present at the decision meeting and finds that they are consistent with the Citywide Design Guidelines. The Director agrees with the Design Review Board's conclusion that the proposed project and conditions imposed result in a design that best meets the intent of the Design Review Guidelines and accepts the recommendations noted by the Board. The Director is satisfied that all of the recommendations imposed by the Design Review Board have been met.

### **Director's Decision:**

The design review process is prescribed in Section 23.41.014 of the Seattle Municipal Code. Subject to the above-proposed conditions, the design of the proposed project was found by the Design Review Board to adequately conform to the applicable Design Guidelines. The Director of DPD has reviewed the decision and recommendations of the Design Review Board made by the four members present at the decision meeting, provided additional review and finds that they are consistent with the City of Seattle Design Review Guidelines. The Design Review Board agreed that the proposed design, along with the condition listed, meets each of the Design Guideline Priorities as previously identified. Therefore, the Director accepts the Design Review Board's recommendations and **CONDITIONALLY APPROVES** the proposed design and requested departure (Residential Building Setback) with the condition summarized at the end of this Decision.

### **SEPA ANALYSIS**

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

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant dated June 10, 2014 and revised December 12, 2014. The Department of Planning and Development has analyzed and annotated the environmental checklists submitted by the project applicant; reviewed the project plans and any additional information in the file and any pertinent comments which may have been received regarding this proposed action have been considered.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665) clarifies the relationship between the City's codes, policies and environmental review. Specific policies for each element of the environment, and 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.

Codes and development regulations applicable to this proposed project will provide sufficient mitigation for most short and/or long term impacts. Applicable codes may include the Stormwater Code (SMC 22.800-808), the Grading Code (SMC 22.170), the Street Use Ordinance (SMC Title 15), the Seattle Building Code, and the Noise Control Ordinance (SMC 25.08). Puget Sound Clean Air Agency regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality. Additional discussion of short and long term impacts is found below.

#### **Short – term Impacts**

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: temporary soil erosion; decreased air quality due to increased dust and other suspended air particulates during demolition, excavation, filling and transport of materials to and from the site; increased noise and vibration from construction operations and equipment; increased traffic and parking demand from construction personnel traveling to and from the work site; consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources; disruption of utilities serving the area; and conflict with normal pedestrian movement adjacent to the site. Compliance with applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most adverse short-term impacts to the environment.

Noise

The site abuts one street (Northwest 51<sup>st</sup> Street). Residential properties are situated north and west of the project site; the northernmost property is located in the same zone (C1-65) and the westernmost property is zoned LR3. Sounds from the neighboring car wash facility to the east and vehicular traffic are identified as existing noise sources. The applicant asserts on the SEPA checklist that construction activity will be confined to construction hours permitted within City of Seattle per the Noise Ordinance. The applicant further specified the estimated construction hours as follows: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday; and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday.

Short-term noise and vibration from construction equipment and construction activity (e.g., backhoes, trucks, concrete mixers, generators, pneumatic hand tools, engine noise, back-up alarms, etc.); and construction vehicles entering and exiting the site would occur as a result of construction and construction-related traffic. Compliance with the Noise Ordinance (SMC 25.08) is required.

The Noise Ordinance states construction activities within 100' of occupied Lowrise and Neighborhood Commercial zones shall be limited to non-legal holiday weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on weekends and legal holidays. Impact construction work (pile driving, jackhammers, vactor trucks, etc.) is further limited (8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. weekdays and 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. weekends and legal holidays). It is the Department's conclusion that limiting hours of construction beyond the requirements of the Noise Ordinance is not justified for this project on this specific site. No further conditioning or mitigation is warranted.

Air Quality

Demolition of the existing structures, grading and construction activities will result in localized short-term increases in air particulates and carbon monoxide which could temporarily affect the air quality in the vicinity. Demolition/construction activities that would contribute to these impacts include excavation, grading, soil compaction, and operation of heavy trucks and smaller equipment (i.e., generators and compressors). Compliance with the Street Use Ordinance (SMC 15.22.060) will require the contractors to water the site or use other dust palliative, as necessary, to reduce airborne dust. In addition, compliance with the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency regulations requires activities which produce airborne materials or other pollutant elements to be contained with temporary enclosure. Regarding asbestos, Federal Law requires the filing of a Notice of Construction with the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency ("PSCAA") prior to demolition. Other potential sources of dust would be soil blowing from uncovered dump trucks and soil carried out of the construction area by vehicle frames and tires; this soil could be deposited on adjacent streets and become airborne.

There is no indication of unusual short term adverse impacts related to air quality. Current codes are adequate to provide mitigation and pursuant to the Overview Policy (SMC Section 25.05.665) and Air Quality Policy (SMC Section 25.05.675A). Therefore, no further mitigation is warranted.

Construction-Related Streets Parking and Pedestrian Circulation

Demolition of the existing structures and grading is proposed. This material would be trucked from the site. The applicant explains that construction vehicles would enter and exit the project site from a temporary construction entrance situated at Northwest 51<sup>st</sup> Street.

Construction of the project is proposed to last for several months. The applicant estimates that an average of 41 construction workers will be onsite throughout the construction process. Per the applicant, “*Construction worker parking will be street parking within the vicinity of site along NW 51<sup>st</sup> St, NW 52<sup>nd</sup> St, NW 50<sup>th</sup> St. In addition to street parking, there is a 37-stall public parking lot on NW 49<sup>th</sup> St that may be used for construction worker parking.*” The applicant further explains that, “*On-site parking will be utilized once the post-tensioned deck is complete.*” Daytime usage of available on-street spaces is likely to be limited due to the proximity of an existing institution (Swedish Ballard Medical Center) in the immediate neighborhood. The demand for parking by construction workers during construction, before onsite parking is made available, is anticipated to further reduce the supply of parking the vicinity.

Increased trip generation is expected during the proposed demolition, grading, and construction activity. The immediate area is subject to traffic congestion during the peak hours on nearby arterials in association with construction activity at nearby sites. Large trucks turning from and onto nearby arterial streets would be expected to further exacerbate the flow of traffic. There are no City codes or ordinances to address the impact of large vehicles on highly congested streets. As a result, mitigation is warranted as described below.

It is the City's policy to minimize or prevent adverse traffic impacts which would undermine the stability, safety, and/or character of a neighborhood or surrounding areas (25.05.675 R). The Street Use Ordinance includes regulations which mitigate dust, mud, and circulation. Any temporary closure of the sidewalk and/or traffic lane(s) is adequately controlled with a street use permit through the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT). Due to construction related demand affected by construction worker parking and increased trip generation; additional mitigation is warranted pursuant to the Construction Impacts Policy (SMC 25.05.675.B). Pursuant to this policy, a Construction Management Plan (CMP) addressing construction worker parking, street/sidewalk closures, truck haul routes and hours of truck traffic, will be required to mitigate identified impacts. This plan should include elements that will reduce construction worker parking demand on surrounding streets and a requirement that truck trips be scheduled to avoid peak period of 4:00-6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The approved plan will be required prior to the issuance of any future demolition, grading and/or building permit.

#### Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Construction activities including construction worker commutes, truck trips, the operation of construction equipment and machinery, and the manufacturing 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 the project.

No further conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

#### Long - term Impacts

Long term or use-related impacts are also anticipated as a result of this proposal, including: increased bulk and scale on the site; increased ambient noise associated with increased human activity and vehicular movement; increased traffic in the area and increased demand for parking; increased demand for public services and utilities; increased airborne emissions resulting from additional traffic; increased energy consumption; and increased light and glare. Compliance

with applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most adverse long-term impacts to the environment.

### Historic Preservation

Section 25.05.675.H of the SEPA code describes the City's policies for protecting historical sites. *"It is the City's policy to maintain and preserve significant historic sites and structures and to provide opportunity for analysis of archeological sites.....For projects involving structures or sites which are not yet designated as historical landmarks but which appear to meet the criteria for designation, the decisionmaker or any interested person may refer the site or structure to the Landmarks Preservation Board for consideration.....On sites with potential archaeological significance, the decisionmaker may require an assessment of the archaeological potential of the site."*

SEPA provides authority to mitigate impacts to historic buildings (SMC 25.05.675.H.2.c). In this instance, the existing commercial building located at 1516 Northwest 51<sup>st</sup> Street is not designated as a historical landmark. However, because this proposal involves the demolition of a building which is more than 50 years old, historical information concerning this property (prepared by the applicant) was referred to the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) for review. The DON Historic Preservation Staff reviewed the information and stated, "Based on the review of this information, we have determined that it is unlikely that the subject building would meet the standards for designation as an individual landmark, due in part to loss of historic materials and integrity." Therefore, no further conditioning is warranted by SEPA.

### Traffic and Transportation

Gibson Traffic Consultants, Inc. (GTC) prepared a Traffic Impact Analysis report (dated September 2014) for the subject site referenced in the report as the "1516 NW 51<sup>st</sup> Street Residential Development" project. This report offers the expected trip generation for the site, estimates project-related changes to the local traffic, collision history of nearby roadway segments/intersections and evaluates potential parking impacts. The analysis in this report is based a proposal for a "6-story multi-family structure with 90 apartment units and 1 live-work unit for a total of 91 residences; "37 parking spaces in a single level of parking"; and, "the removal of the existing 5,126 SF of warehouse space."

Trip generation for the project was determined using the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual (9<sup>th</sup> edition) for the following categories: Mid-Rise Apartments (ITE Land Use Code 22), and removal of existing warehouse building (ITE Land Use Code 150). Based on this information, the proposal is estimated to generate an increase in daily trips (362), AM peak hour trips (27), and PM peak hour trips (34) compared to conditions with the existing building on site.

Level of service (LOS) analysis was performed for one nearby intersection. The analysis showed that the proposed access to Northwest 51<sup>st</sup> Street would operate at LOS A with 8.9 seconds of delay for vehicles leaving the site and no delay for vehicles on Northwest 51<sup>st</sup> Street.

It is projected that the proposed project would increase overall traffic volumes in the neighborhood. However, these trips aren't expected to adversely impact the surrounding roadway network. It is expected that the amount of traffic generated by this proposal is within

the capacity of the streets in the immediate area. Thus, no SEPA mitigation of traffic impacts is warranted.

### Parking

The proposal site is situated within a commercial zone (C1-65), the Ballard Hub Urban Village and the frequent transit service corridor. No parking is required for the project per the Land Use Code (SMC 23.54). The submitted MUP plans indicate 35 parking spaces will be provided onsite.

A parking utilization study conducted by GTC (dated November 24, 2014) collected on-street parking information within 800' of the project site; spaces on the east side of 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue Northwest were not included in the study area, due to the lack of pedestrian crossings of this principal arterial near the project site. The GTC study identified 199 legal on-street parking spaces within the study area and based on two days of parking counts, the average utilization rate of these spaces is 73% in the late evening (after 10 PM). The GTC study also estimated that the project is likely to generate a peak (overnight) parking demand for 61 spaces. The project would construct 35 parking spaces, so 26 vehicles would be added to the on-street demand. This would bring the future on-street parking utilization in the study area to 86%.

One other project in the vicinity of the site is expected to generate parking demand that will result in greater use of on-street spaces. A parking analysis for a congregate residence at 1510 Northwest 52<sup>nd</sup> Street estimated a spillover parking demand of 18 vehicles. Including these 18 vehicles within the study area for the proposed project would result in a cumulative future on-street parking utilization rate of 95%. At this level of parking utilization, it is likely that persons looking for on-street parking would look somewhat further than 800' from the project site. GTC noted that a 37-stall public parking lot is located on Northwest 49<sup>th</sup> Street within 800' of the project site, and that only three vehicles were parked in this lot during their parking counts. Some persons seeking on-street parking might choose to park in this lot. In addition, a constrained on-street parking supply might lead to slightly lower vehicle ownership by project residents, which could slightly decrease parking demand.

Although SEPA Policy 25.05.675.M recognizes that increased parking demand associated with development projects may adversely affect the availability of parking in an area, Policy 25.05.675.M.2.b.2.c states no SEPA authority is provided for the decision maker to mitigate the impact of development on parking availability for residential uses located within urban villages and within 1,320 of a street with frequent transit service (frequent transit corridor) as in this case. Therefore no mitigation can be required of this project to modify its parking impact.

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

No further conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

## **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 43.21C.030(2)(C).
- [ ] 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(2)(C).

## **SEPA CONDITIONS**

### **Prior to Issuance of Any Demolition, Grading and Building Permit:**

1. In order to address construction related transportation and parking impacts, the responsible party shall submit a Construction Management Plan (CMP) to be reviewed and approved by Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) in consultation with DPD. A construction transportation plan for workers and truck deliveries/routes shall be prepared to minimize disruption to traffic flow on adjacent streets and roadways. This plan shall include a requirement that truck trips be scheduled to avoid the peak period of 4:00-6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The plan shall consider the need for special signage; flaggers; haul route definitions; street cleaning; identification of potential street and/or sidewalk closures; vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian circulation and safety; and identification of construction-worker parking. This plan should include elements that will reduce construction worker parking demand on surrounding streets.

### **During Construction**

2. The owner(s) and/or responsible party(s) shall comply with the Construction Management Plan. A copy of that plan must be kept onsite.

## **DESIGN REVIEW CONDITIONS**

### **Prior to Certificate of Occupancy**

3. The Land Use Planner (Tami Garrett 206-233-7182 or [tami.garrett@seattle.gov](mailto:tami.garrett@seattle.gov)) shall inspect materials, colors, and design of the constructed project. An appointment with the assigned Land Use Planner must be made at least seven (7) working days in advance of field inspection. All items shall be constructed and finished as shown in the Master Use Plan (MUP) set. Any change to the proposed design, materials, or colors shall require prior approval by the Land Use Planner. The Land Use Planner will determine whether submission of revised plans is required to ensure that compliance has been achieved.
4. The applicant shall provide a landscape certificate from Director's Rule 10-2011, indicating that all vegetation has been installed per approved landscape plans. Any change to the landscape plans approved with this Master Use Permit shall be approved by the Land Use Planner (Tami Garrett 206-233-7182 or [tami.garrett@seattle.gov](mailto:tami.garrett@seattle.gov)).

For the Life of the Project

5. The building and landscape design shall be substantially consistent with the materials represented at the Recommendation meeting and in the materials submitted after the Recommendation meeting, before the MUP issuance. Any change to the proposed design, including materials or colors, shall require prior approval by the Land Use Planner (Tami Garrett 206-233-7182 or [tami.garrett@seattle.gov](mailto:tami.garrett@seattle.gov)).

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (signature on file) Date: February 17, 2015  
Tami Garrett, Senior Land Use Planner  
Department of Planning and Development

TYG:drm

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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](mailto:prc@seattle.gov) or to our message line at 206-684-8467.