



City of Seattle

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Gregory J. Nickels, 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:** 2407892

**Applicant Name:** Catherine Benotto, Weber & Thompson Architects for Urban Innovations

**Address of Proposal:** 3231 SW. Raymond St.  
(Block 9 High Point)

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Master Use Permit to establish use for future construction of 17, three-story 2-unit townhouses (totaling 34 units) with parking for 56 vehicles located within the structure and in surface spaces.<sup>1</sup>

The following approvals are required:

**SEPA** – for conditioning only Chapter 25.05, Seattle Municipal Code.

**Administrative Design Review** - Chapter 23.41 Seattle Municipal Code.

Development Standard Departures from the Land Use Code are requested as follows:

1. Building width (SMC 23.45.011.A)

**SEPA DETERMINATION:**  Exempt  DNS  MDNS  EIS<sup>2</sup>

DNS with conditions

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

<sup>1</sup> Project originally noticed as Master Use Permit to establish use for future construction of 17, 3-story 2-unit townhouses (totaling 34 units) with parking for 42 vehicles located within the structure.

<sup>2</sup> FEIS was published by SHA on September 2002 addressing both short-term and long-term impacts associated with the High Point redevelopment pursuant to the contract rezone (#2105600) and full subdivision (#2102170).

**BACKGROUND DATA**

### Site & Vicinity Description

The subject site is located within the High Point community in West Seattle at the southwest corner of SW Raymond St and Lanham Place SW (Block 9). The 120 acre High Point community, undergoing redevelopment by the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) will provide approximately 1,600 units of new housing upon completion. The SHA project included a contract rezone (DPD project no. 2105600) and a Subdivision (DPD project no.2202170). The subject project is part of the private market rate housing component of the larger High Point development.

SHA requires that all land developed in the High Point community meet the expectations, principles and standards in their “High Point Design Book”. The design book is not a City document; although, the book is meant to augment the City of Seattle’s “Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings”.

The surrounding property to the north, across SW Raymond Street is zoned Single Family 5000 (SF5000) and developed with single family homes; to the east across Lanham Place SW is zoned Lowrise 4 (L-4) and is to be developed with park and multifamily housing; to the south is zoned Neighborhood Commercial 2 with a 40 foot height limit and Lowrise 2 (L-2) and is to be developed with a mixed use project including a grocery store and a seniors apartment building; to the west across a pedestrian easement is zoned Lowrise 1 (L-1) and developed with a health center and public library.

### Project Description

The applicant is proposing 34 townhouse units with attached one and two car garages. The site plan shows 17 two-unit structures with attached garages accessed at the rear of the units via private auto courts. Fifty-six parking spaces will be provided including five surface parking spaces. Pedestrian entrances are shown from either the street or an internal green space. The townhouses will range in size from 1300 to 1700 square feet.

### Public Comment

Two public comments were received during the public comment period associated with Administrative Design Review which ended on January 13, 2005. Both letters indicated a concern with granting the requested departures and asked that the required setbacks be met. They asked that the large tree at the corner of Raymond and Lanham be retained.

Further notice and public comment opportunity was provided as required with the Master Use Permit application. No comments were received during the Master Use Permit comment period that ended on April 20, 2005.

## **ANALYSIS - DESIGN REVIEW**

Early Design Guidance

### **PRIORITIES:**

DPD Staff provided the siting and design guidance described below after considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents. The Design Guidelines of highest priority to this project are identified by letter and

number below and are described in more detail in the City of Seattle's "*Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings*".

## **A. Site Planning**

### **A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics**

*The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.*

### **A-2 Streetscape Compatibility**

*The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.*

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

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

### **A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street**

*For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.*

### **A-10 Corner Lots**

*Buildings on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.*

The site is at a prominent location along main thoroughfares, SW Raymond Street and Lanham Place SW. The development will be the first residential development seen when entering the community from 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW. The corner of Lanham Place SW and SW Raymond Street is a prominent corner internal to the community. A pedestrian easement borders the site to the west. The design must respond to these site conditions on three sides by orienting homes towards the streets and the pedestrian easement. The project needs to clearly demark the unit entries and have a strong street presence, but also must create a friendly pedestrian environment. Orient the units towards SW Raymond on the western side, like shown in option 3B.

Design elements need to be used to clearly communicate the boundaries between private and public space especially along the pedestrian easement and at the throat of the central green space along SW Raymond Street.

The siting of the buildings should be sited to ensure the survival of significant trees as denoted on SHA maps.

The corner structure at Raymond and Lanham needs to address both street frontages with pedestrian friendly elements and quality materials. The grade relationship from the sidewalk to the unit entry must be adequately addressed so that the scale of the stair structure is lessened at the sidewalk.

## **D. Pedestrian Environment**

### **D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances**

*Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.*

The street presence for this project is important considering the location as described in the Site Planning section (A). The plans must show sufficient detail on the landscaping, walls, planters and fencing to demonstrate that the spaces will be well designed, usable and create a friendly street and pedestrian scale.

### **D-2 Blank Walls**

*Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable, they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.*

### **D-3 Retaining Walls**

*Retaining walls near a public sidewalk that extend higher than eye level should be avoided where possible. Where high retaining walls are unavoidable, they should be designed to reduce their impact on pedestrian comfort and to increase the visual interest along the streetscape.*

Blank walls and retaining walls visible from the street need to be minimized. When walls are visible, they should be designed to increase pedestrian comfort and visual interest. Design solutions can include; integrating landscaping, terracing walls or using quality materials and details to create a good human scale.

## **E. Landscaping**

### **E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site**

*Landscaping including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.*

Landscaping is a very important element in meeting the design guidance for this project specifically, in the spaces between the structures and the street; the internal green space and for treatment of any retaining walls.

The applicant applied for a Master Use Permit on March 14, 2005. DPD reviewed the design proposed and evaluated how the design met the design guidance provided.

The structures face and frame the streets as well as a central semi-private green space providing a cottage cluster type atmosphere. The architectural character of the buildings is in the Northwest Craftsman tradition with large front porches and easy ground level access to open space. The buildings have strong gabled roofs with porches, dormers and bays to

provide modulation. Additionally, the material and color palette provides a good dynamic that will add to the character and interest of the development. Therefore, the departure for building modulation is granted in that the design better meets the citywide design guidelines (C-1 Architectural Context, C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency).

The building at the corner is to have one pedestrian entry from SW Raymond Street and another from Lanham Place SW. This configuration responds to the corner better in that it adds interest to both street fronts (A-10 Corner Lots, A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street)

A large shade tree (Japanese Zelkova) is proposed and will be a landmark that will provide a strong focal point for the corner. This species grows quickly in youth and will resemble a Chinese Elm in habit and character at maturity. The corner unit will have views out under the canopy of the tree. Other Zelkovas are proposed along the west property line to screen the adjoining commercial use proposed to the west. The repeated use of this tree will give this project grounding and a unique identity within the neighborhood (A-10 Corner Lots, D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances, E-2 Landscaping to enhance the Building and/or Site).

Most of the buildings on SW Raymond Street provide entries from the street as compared to orienting all the entries to the internal green space (A-2 Streetscape Compatibility, A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street, A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street).

A colorful palette of plant material has been proposed to enhance the site. Boxwood hedges are proposed to denote the boundary between the street and the private open space. The preservation of the existing cherry tree at the entry to the internal green space will provide a landmark and helps to identify the boundary between the sidewalk and private open space. (A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics, A-2 Streetscape Compatibility, A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street, E-2 Landscaping to enhance the Building and/or Site). The existing tree (Western Red Cedar) at the corner of Lanham and Raymond was damaged by a storm and deemed not to be a good candidate for preservation. This was documented in a tree preservation update by the Seattle Housing Authority.

Walkways to the buildings facing Lanham and throughout most of the development are joined together as they meet the sidewalk, rather than having two separate walks.

On the SW Raymond Streetscape, a trellis structure has been added between the building clusters. This trellis and guardrails are at the top of the retaining walls enclosing the car courts below. The retaining wall portion is not exposed on the street side as the grade is several feet lower on the garage side. The wall acts to screen headlights and traffic and the trellis softens the visual impact of the garage below. Visibility of blank walls and retaining walls from the street is minimized in that landscaping is proposed adjacent to the walls. (D-2 Blank Walls, D-3 Retaining Walls)

**Departure from Development Standards**

The applicant requested departures from the following Land Use Code development standards:

<i>Requirement</i>	<i>Proposed</i>	<i>Applicant's Rationale</i>	<i>DPD Analysis</i>
23.45.011.A Building Width 40 feet without modulation	42 feet with no modulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building width at the street face is 38 ft. Two foot wide side architectural features increase the building width to 42 ft. These features do not meet the code modulation standards. However they do meet the spirit of the code along with front porches and material changes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The design of the development includes a variety of bays, material, color and features which contributes towards meeting the intent of the modulation standards and results in a project which better meets the citywide design guidelines.</li> </ul>

**DECISION- DESIGN REVIEW**

Granted with departure from development standards for building width.

**ANALYSIS - SEPA**

The environmental impacts have been analyzed in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) prepared by Seattle Housing Authority. The FEIS was issued in September 2002.

The Department is reviewing the environmental impacts of the proposal in order to impose further conditions if necessary. This proposal is reviewed under substantive SEPA authority. Disclosure of the potential impacts from this proposal was made in the environmental documents listed above. This information, supplemental information provided by the applicant and the experience of this agency with review of similar proposals form the basis of this analysis and conditioning.

**Short - Term Impacts**

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: decreased air quality due to suspended particulate from building activities and hydrocarbon emissions from construction vehicles and equipment; increased dust caused by construction activities; potential soil erosion and potential disturbance to subsurface soils during grading, excavation, and general site work; increased storm water runoff volumes; increased traffic and demand for parking from construction equipment and personnel; conflict with normal pedestrian movement adjacent to the site; increased noise; and consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources.

Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified construction related impacts. Specifically these are: Storm water, Grading and Drainage Control Code (grading, site excavation and soil erosion); Street Use Ordinance (watering streets to

suppress dust, removal of debris, and obstruction of the pedestrian right-of-way). However, a more detailed discussion of the noise impacts associated with this proposal is provided below.

### Noise

The project is expected to generate loud noise during grading and construction. These impacts would be especially adverse in the early morning, in the evening, and on weekends. The surrounding properties are developed with multifamily and single family housing uses and will be impacted by construction noise. Pursuant to SEPA authority, the applicant shall be required to limit periods of construction to between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. during non-holiday weekdays. This condition may be modified by DPD to allow work of an emergency nature or allow low noise interior work after the exterior of the structure is enclosed. This condition may also be modified to permit low noise exterior work (e.g., installation of landscaping) after approval from DPD.

### Long-term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are also anticipated as a result of approval of this proposal including: increased bulk and scale on the site; increased traffic in the area and increased demand for parking; increased demand for public services and utilities; and increased light and glare.

Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically these are: the Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code which requires on site detention of stormwater with provisions for controlled tightline release to an approved outlet and may require additional design elements to prevent isolated flooding; the City Energy Code which will require insulation for outside walls and energy efficient windows; and the Land Use Code which controls site coverage, setbacks, building height and use and contains other development and use regulations to assure compatible development.

Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances, and adherence to previous conditions imposed on the subdivision and rezone of the site are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation of long term impacts; therefore, no SEPA conditions for long-term impacts are needed for this proposal.

## **NON-APPEALABLE CONDITIONS - DESIGN REVIEW**

### During construction

1. All changes to approved plans with respect to the exterior façade of the building and landscaping on site and in the right of way must be reviewed by a Land Use Planner prior to proceeding with any proposed changes.

### Prior to Issuance of Certificate of Occupancy

2. Compliance with the approved design features and elements, including exterior materials, roof pitches, façade colors, landscaping and right of way improvements, shall be verified by the DPD Land Use Planner assigned to this project (Jess Harris- 206-684-7744) or by

a Land Use Planner Supervisor (Jerry Suder- 386-4069). Inspection appointments must be made at least 3 working days in advance of the inspection.

## **CONDITIONS SEPA**

### **During Construction**

The following condition(s) to be enforced during construction shall be posted at the site in a location on the property line that is visible and accessible to the public and to construction personnel from the street right-of-way. If more than one street abuts the site, conditions shall be posted at each street. The conditions will be affixed to placards prepared by DPD. The placards will be issued along with the building permit set of plans. The placards shall be laminated with clear plastic or other waterproofing material and shall remain posted on-site for the duration of the construction.

1. The hours of construction activity shall be limited to non-holiday weekdays between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. This condition may be modified by DPD to allow work of an emergency nature or allow low noise interior work after the exterior of the structure is enclosed. This condition may also be modified to permit low noise exterior work (e.g., installation of landscaping) after approval from DPD.

Signature: (signature on file)  
Jess E. Harris, AICP, Senior Land Use Planner  
Department of Planning and Development

Date: August 25, 2005