



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

Diane Sugimura, Director

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

Application Number: 3003324
Applicant Name: Shanna Kovalchick, Nicholson Kovalchick Architects
for Glover Homes
Address of Proposal: 418 Bellevue Avenue East

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Master Use Permit for future construction of an eight-unit apartment townhouse structure. Parking for 14 vehicles to be provided within the structure. Project includes the demolition of the existing multi-family structure.

The following approvals are required:

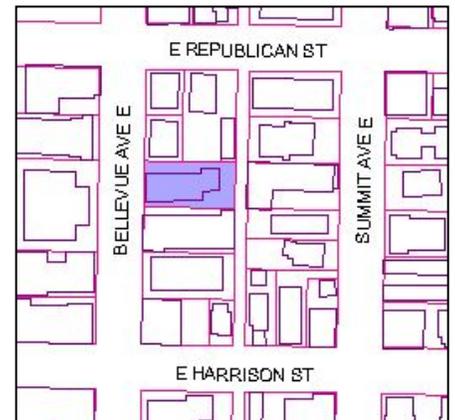
Administrative Design Review and Development Standard Departures, pursuant to SMC Chapter 23.41

SEPA DETERMINATION: Exempt DNS MDNS EIS
 DNS with conditions
 DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND

Site and Vicinity

The subject site, zoned Midrise with a 60-foot height limit (MR), is located mid-block on the west side of Bellevue Avenue East, between East Harrison Street and East Republican Street. The site is made up of one lot and one existing multi-family residential structure. There is improved alley access to the site to the west. While the site is relatively flat, there is a 14-16 feet difference between the street and the alley with a vertical retaining wall against the east property line at the alley. The Midrise zone continues on all sides of the subject site. The area is well served by transit and is developed with mostly higher density multi-family residential structures.



Public Comments

Two comment letters were received in response to the Early Design Guidance application notice. The following comments were offered:

- Object to the long-term decline allowed to occur to the subject property and sale to a developer unfamiliar with the neighborhood;
- Oppose recent development in the area as poorly designed, cheaply constructed and disrespecting the scale and pattern of existing development;
- Concerned with the ability to locate ugly and view-blocking equipment on the rooftops of building, adding significant height increases;
- Access to parking should be provided from the alley and not the street to avoid losing on-street parking in a very congested neighborhood;
- Maintain trees that are located on the property and provide privacy between neighbors;
- Include a greens pace between the building and the sidewalk; and
- Design an interesting, colorful building with significant transparency and variation.

Public notice of the Master Use Permit application was published on February 16, 2006 and mailed to neighboring properties within 300 feet of the project site. The public comment period ended on March 1, 2006. No comment letters have been received since the Master Use Permit application was submitted.

ANALYSIS – DESIGN REVIEW

Architect's Presentation

Four schemes were presented in the Early Design Guidance materials. The first (Option 1) proposed a building mass driven purely by zoning, resulting in a rectangular six-story box with the required modulation occurring at approximately the middle of the site. The second alternative (Option 2) shows two buildings, each with three townhouses with a driveway along the south side of the property. The third alternative (Option 3) shows two buildings, each with four townhouses accessed from a driveway off of Bellevue Avenue East. The two townhouses fronting onto Bellevue would have open spaces flanking either side of the driveway. The fourth option and preferred scheme (Option 4) is similar to Option 3, except that the townhouse units fronting onto Bellevue Avenue East will contain ground level interior living spaces with glazing facing onto the sidewalk.

The final design proposal further elaborates on Option 4 and includes greater detail regarding architectural design, building materials, street level design and information pertaining to the proposed departures. The two front units facing Bellevue Avenue include living space at the sidewalk level with large windows, overhead canopies, brick veneer framing the first floor and a five-foot deep stoop area along the front. On either side of these units, stairs leading to a pathway hugging the north and south property lines provides access to the six interior units. A driveway is nestled between the two front units off of Bellevue and the garage door is recessed back from the property line by approximately 12 feet. The open space for the four interior units facing each other is configured between the two buildings and aligns with the open space of the property immediately to the north.

DESIGN GUIDANCE

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, DPD staff has provided the following siting and design guidance and identified by letter and number those siting and design guidelines found in the City of Seattle's *Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings* of highest priority to this project. The Final Recommendation comments by DPD staff follow in italic text.

Site Planning

- A-3 **Entrances Visible from the Street.** Entries should be clearly identifiable from the street.
- A-4 **Human Activity.** New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity along the street.
- A-5 **Respect for Adjacent Sites.** Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.
- A-7 **Residential Open Space.** Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.
- A-8 **Parking and Vehicle Access.** Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties, and pedestrian safety.

DPD staff noted that the residential units fronting Bellevue Avenue should read as low-density residential uses and reinforce the residential nature of the street. DPD suggests that perhaps these units can appear to be turned to face the street, rather than appear as the side elevation of these two units.

DPD staff looks forward to reviewing a high-quality well-programmed and well-landscaped open space design. To enhance a strong residential presence on the street, the architects are encouraged to explore inclusion of stoop-like open spaces for the two units fronting Bellevue Avenue East.

DPD staff would like to see further exploration of parking access from the alley, rather than from the street. While the topographical condition makes this difficult, DPD would like to see this option exhausted.

DPD suggests that the applicant explore inclusion of elevators in only some of the proposed units, thereby allowing for greater flexibility in configuring the project on the site with potentially more open area at grade.

The revised design has turned the two street facing units towards the street by including living space at the ground level, increased the transparency, added metal awnings above the first floor, brick veneer around the first floor, five foot deep stoop spaces just above sidewalk level, several sets of balconies overlooking the street and an innovative rainwater retention system that funnels water from the roof to the built in planter box above the garage. The elevators for these two units have been eliminated in order to accommodate the required front setback, thereby providing the stoop spaces.

The access continues to be from the street rather than the alley mostly due to the topographical constraints of the site and resulting parking quantity limitations. The design has striven to minimize the presence of the driveway by recessing the door at least 12 feet from the property line and including the aforementioned planter above the driveway that will include hanging vegetation. DPD staff recommends greater attention to the driveway area at the sidewalk level and inclusion of interesting pavers or colored and/or scored concrete. Also, greater detail to the doorway (leading to the garage), mailboxes and any signage and lighting could help enhance this façade and pull attention from the driveway location.

Height, Bulk, and Scale

B-1 Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility. Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to nearby, less intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk, and scale between the anticipated development potential on the adjacent zones.

DPD staff supports the design alternative that minimizes the bulk and scale of the proposed development program by breaking the development into two distinct building forms and refraining from building to the maximum height potential of 60 feet.

DPD staff feels that the building form is interesting and unique from the surrounding context, while maintaining a comparable bulk and height as the abutting structures.

Architectural Elements

C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency.

- Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept.
- Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building.

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

C-4 Exterior Finish Materials. Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

C-5 Structured Parking Entrances. The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.

Given the varied collection of buildings in the vicinity, DPD staff did not highlight a single architectural expression to develop. Rather, DPD staff encourages innovative residential design that is cohesive and applied evenly throughout the development.

DPD staff looks forward to reviewing a more detailed, high quality material and color palette. Specifically, DPD strongly encourages the use of brick or other masonry reflective of materials found in the neighborhood. The fenestration type, proportions scale, pattern and size will also be critical considerations.

DPD staff strongly feels that if any vehicular access is taken from Bellevue, it should be visually and structurally minimized to cause as little disruption to pedestrian circulation around the site as possible. Specifically, attractive pavers, lighting, landscaping, arbor features, etc could be used to both screen the driveway and draw attention to the residential units on either side.

The proposed material palette includes brick veneer around the large windows of the street facing units, vinyl windows, metal canopies and decks, corrugated vertical metal siding on the building body, cement fiber panels and metal siding at the bay windows. The color palette includes green and terra cotta colors for the building body, black accents, tan windows, tan and beige toned fiber panels and burgundy and black brick colors. DPD staff encouraged the metal siding be a flush panel design as apposed to the box-rib, typical corrugated or v-beam configurations. The flush panel design appears less incongruous with the traditional brick proposed at the base. For similar reasons, DPD staff also recommends use of a flat metal panel material for the bay windows. DPD staff also recommends that the color of the building body be slightly toned down while the bay windows integrate a more dramatic color contrast.

DPD supports the architectural design of the proposed structure and feels that the butterfly-roof design offers homage to some of the retro buildings found in the neighborhood while the use of brick at the base references the many traditional historic buildings found nearby.

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.
- D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures.** The visibility of at-grade parking structures should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape.
- D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas.** Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks, and mechanical equipment away from the street where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units, and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.
- D-7 Personal Safety and Security.** Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.

DPD staff strongly supports inclusion of ground level interior space at the street front to allow the two westernmost units to face and interact with the street and buffer the sidewalk from the parking garage.

DPD staff wants the service areas and access to the service areas to be located off the alley, minimized and well-integrated into the building in order to be as unobtrusive as possible. DPD staff also recommends a strong preference for trash collection to occur from the alley rather than from the street.

DPD staff noted that ground level open space and the alley side of the site (west) in particular should be well-lit and contained on the site.

As mentioned earlier, DPD supports the pulling back of the building front to allow stoop areas at the street front. DPD is also very pleased that all of the service elements have been provided along the alley side in an enclosed space and will not be accessed from the street. Wall sconces have been included on all building facades, including the alley.

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.

DPD staff encourages an innovative and well-programmed residential courtyard design. DPD staff looks forward to a detailed graphic showing the design of this courtyard. DPD staff wants to see the ramp and steps combined where they are proposed to connect the sidewalk to the courtyard at the southeast corner in order to create a more distinctive, landscaped, functional entry pathway.

DPD staff is pleased with the pedestrian pathways running the length of the property along both the north and south property lines. DPD is also happy that the proposed open space aligns with that of the building to the north. The landscape plan includes a variety of vegetation (Korean Dogwoods, New Zealand flax, rosemary, and bamboo) that will provide year-round color with seasonal variation and texture. DPD recommends that the glazing of the two front units is reduced to include more of a solid base below the windows, allowing for greater privacy of the residential units. Also, additional landscaping and detail should be added to the stoop areas along Bellevue Avenue.

DPD recommends that further exploration of additional innovative irrigation systems be integrated throughout the site, similar to that shown on the west façade. It is also encouraged that planter boxes are included at the balcony levels for the two street facing units.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The following departures from the development standards were proposed at this time:

- 1. ACCESS (SMC 23.45.060):** The applicant proposes to take access from the street. DPD staff indicated that they would like to see access options from the alley exhausted before entertaining this departure request. A critical determination of is based on how well the design of the driveway minimizes its presence on the existing streetscape character and sidewalk environment. DPD staff feels that the driveway presence is minimized by the recessed door, the overhead planter and dominant brick bookends. Despite these efforts, additional attention to the driveway surface and entry area would help further minimize the driveway presence. **For these reasons, the requested departure is approved along with the following conditions. (A-8, C-4, C-5, D-5, E-2)**
 1. Integration of either pavers or a colored and/or scored concrete for the portion of the driveway on private property.

2. Submit a lighting and signage plan for the building, providing particular attention to the mailbox area and pedestrian access door to the garage.
 3. Submit a well-detailed garage door design consistent with the building architecture.
- 2. SETBACKS (SMC 23.45.056):** The applicant proposes to reduce portions of the required front, side, rear and cluster setbacks. DPD staff originally indicated that the departure request appeared excessive and encroached significantly onto those areas most visible to the surrounding residents. The design has since evolved to include the required front setback, allowing for stoop areas and landscaping fronting onto the sidewalk. Furthermore, the design has successfully turned towards the street creating an appearance of two units on the street. The reduction on the other setbacks is less apparent from the public realm and cannot be perceived from the street or alley. **For these reasons, the requested departure is approved. (A-3, A-4, B-1, C-2, E-2)**
- 3. OPEN SPACE (SMC 23.45.057):** The applicant proposes to reduce the amount of open space from that required by Code from 2,400 square feet to 2,434 square feet, none of which meets the ten-foot minimum dimension. DPD staff agrees that the open space softens the façade from the pedestrian environment and will provide seasonal interest and color. DPD is also pleased with the well-lit pedestrian pathways running along the north and south property lines and the innovative water collection systems. There are several minor areas where additional landscaping would dramatically help enhance the site. **For these reasons, the requested departure is approved with the following conditions. (A-7, C-3, D-1, E-2)**
1. Explore the use of landscaping or other features creating visual interest in those areas shown as gravel along the north and south sides of the structure.
 2. Explore additional water retention systems for the remaining six units.
 3. Reduce the glazing of the two front units to include more of a solid base below the windows, allowing for greater privacy of the residential units.
 4. Include additional landscaping and detail to the stoop areas along Bellevue Avenue.
- 4. STRUCTURE DEPTH (SMC 23.45.052):** The applicant proposes to increase the structure depth from 65% of the lot depth (78') to 70% (84' or 97', if bays included). DPD staff is pleased that the height and scale of the proposed structure is closely aligned with immediate development in the area. The perception of additional depth is not apparent from the street or alley. **For these reasons, the requested departure is approved. (A-3, A-4, A-5, B-1)**
- 5. MODULATION (SMC 23.45.054):** The applicant proposes to reduce the required modulation from eight feet deep on the front façade to the provision of three foot deep bay windows. DPD is pleased with the interesting building form that includes a butterfly roof, decks and bay windows on all sides of the structures, including the interior facades. The design is visually interesting and will be compatible with the existing development in the vicinity. The proposed material and color palette, however, requires further attention to better reflect the surrounding context. **For these reasons, the requested departure is approved along with the following conditions. (C-4, B-1, C-2, E-2)**
1. The corrugated metal siding shall be changed to the flush panel design.
 2. The bay windows shall be a flat metal panel material.
 3. The color palette shall be adjusted to tone down the color of the building body, while reserving the more dramatic colors for the window bays.

Departure Summary Table

STANDARD	REQUIRED	PROPOSED	APPLICANT JUSTIFICATION	RECOMMENDATION
ACCESS SMC 23.45.060	Access from alley only	Access from street (Bellevue Avenue)	Proposed bonus rooms at street level. All parking would be above grade. If taken from alley grade, then limited to 6 units. Below grade minimizes impacts.	DPD staff approves requested departure with conditions.
SETBACKS SMC 23. 45.056	Side: 8' Rear: 10' Cluster: 20' avg., 15' min	Side: 5' Rear: 9', 6' at bays 15'5" avg., 12' min	Proposed bonus rooms at street level, lower than allowed height, bulk and scale and compatible with non-conforming setbacks in the neighborhood. Proposed structure is approx. 20' shorter than allowed by Code – nearly meets L4 standards.	DPD staff approves requested departure.
OPEN SPACE SMC 23.45.057	300 SF/unit =2,400 sf total 10' min dimension	224 SF/unit =2,434 sf total 9' min dimension	Include attractive, usable and high quality hardscape and planting areas (decks, terraces, ground level open space of various sizes).	DPD staff approves requested departure with conditions.
STRUCTURE DEPTH SMC 23.45.052	65% lot depth = 78'.	84' (97' if bays included).	Bay windows provide modulation. Compatible with non-conforming structures in neighborhood.	DPD staff approves requested departure.
MODULATION SMC 23.45.054	8' deep at front façade greater than 40' wide.	3' deep bay windows at front, rear and interior facades.	Three foot modulation more in scale with proposed development. More modulation than required provided at interior and rear facades.	DPD staff approves requested departure with conditions.

SUMMARY OF ADMINISTRATIVE DESIGN REVIEW RECOMMENDATION

The recommendations summarized above were based on the boards submitted to DPD on January 6, 2006 and January 17, 2006. Design, siting or architectural details not specifically identified or altered in these recommendations are expected to be reflected in all future plans submitted to DPD.

After considering the site and context, public comments, the response to the design guideline priorities and reviewing the plans the Director recommends **APPROVAL** of the subject design with conditions, as well as the requested departures summarized above.

CONDITIONS - DESIGN REVIEW

Prior to Issuance of the Master Use Permit

The applicant shall:

1. Revise the plans to show integration of either pavers or a colored and/or scored concrete for the portion of the driveway on private property.
2. Submit a lighting and signage plan for the building, providing particular attention to the mailbox area and pedestrian access door to the garage.
3. Submit a well-detailed garage door design consistent with the building architecture.

4. Explore the use of landscaping or other features creating visual interest in those areas shown as gravel along the north and south sides of the structure.
5. Explore additional water retention systems for the remaining six units.
6. Reduce the glazing of the two front units to include more of a solid base below the windows, allowing for greater privacy of the residential units.
7. Include additional landscaping and detail to the stoop areas along Bellevue Avenue.
8. Revise the corrugated metal siding to the flush panel design.
9. The bay windows shall be a flat metal panel material.
10. Adjust the color palette to tone down the color of the building body, while reserving the more dramatic colors for the window bays.

Non-Appealable Conditions

11. Any proposed changes to the exterior of the building or the site or must be submitted to DPD for review and approval by the Land Use Planner (Lisa Rutzick, phone #206-386-9049). Any proposed changes to the improvements in the public right-of-way must be submitted to DPD and SDOT for review and for final approval by SDOT.
12. Compliance with all images and text on the MUP drawings, design review meeting guidelines and approved design features and elements (including exterior materials, landscaping and ROW improvements) shall be verified by the DPD planner assigned to this project (Lisa Rutzick, phone #206-386-9049), or by the Design Review Manager. An appointment with the assigned Land Use Planner must be made at least three working days in advance of field inspection. The Land Use Planner will determine whether submission of revised plans is required to ensure that compliance has been achieved.
13. Embed all of these conditions in the cover sheet for the MUP permit and for all subsequent permits including updated MUP plans, and all building permit drawings.

Prior to Issuance of the Master Use Permit

14. Submit updated plans to DPD reflecting all of the elements, colors and features represented in this decision, as well as from the materials dated January 6, 2006 and January 17, 2006.

During Construction:

15. All changes to the exterior facades of the building and landscaping on site and in the ROW must be reviewed by the Land Use Planner prior to proceeding with any proposed changes.

Prior to Issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy:

16. Compliance with the approved design features and elements, including exterior materials, roof pitches, facade colors, landscaping and ROW improvements, shall be verified by the DPD Planner assigned to this project. Inspection appointments with the Planner (Lisa Rutzick, phone # 206-386-9049 must be made at least three working days in advance of the inspection.

Signature: (signature on file)
Lisa Rutzick, Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development

Date: May 1, 2006