



City of Seattle

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



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE SOUTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3011576

Address: 1814 12th Avenue South

Applicant: Marc Rudd

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Board Members Present: Sam Cameron
Amoreena Miller
Stephen Yamada-Heidner

Board Members Absent: Tony Case
Brett Conway

DPD Staff Present: Bruce P. Rips

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Lowrise Three (LR3)

Nearby Zones: North: LR3
South: Single Family 5000 (SF5000)
East: LR3 and Lowrise Two (LR2) east of 13th Ave. S.
West: LR3. SF 5000 west of alley between 11th and 12th Avenues S.

Lot Area: 7,200 sq. ft.



Current Development: Single Family residence

Access: Potential access from South Holgate St., 12th Avenue S. and the alley.

Surrounding Development & Neighborhood Character: One story apartment building to the north; two apartment buildings (two and three stories high, to the east; single family residences to the west and south. To the west of 12th Ave S. are I-5 right of way, city of Seattle park land and single family residences.

ECAs: No mapped environmentally critical areas on site.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Applicant proposes to construct a four story, 23 unit apartment building with parking for 12 vehicles to be provided below grade.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The applicant illustrated three options or design scenarios. The massing for this infill site's three schemes varied slightly. The similarity in the massing reflects the desire to modulate the north and south elevations to mark the entrance on S. Holgate St. and accommodate a common open space for the residents. The location of garage access represents the most significant difference among the alternatives with Option # 1's parking entrance facing the alley. Ingress and egress for the two other options occurs at 12th Ave S. The applicant places the formal pedestrian or residential entry close to the site's mid-point along S. Holgate and introduces a sequence of entry court, open passage way and private rear court. The size and proportion of the courts varies within each option. An open vertical circulation system (stairs, multi-level open walkways to the units, and elevator) in each of these options wraps around three sides of the rectangular courtyard.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 15 members of the public affixed their names to the Early Design Guidance sign-in sheet. The public raised the following comments and issues:

- The building should reflect the transition between zones. Across S. Holgate to the south, the zone changes.
- The property across 12th Ave won't be developed with lowrise multifamily buildings due to the small lots and the steep slopes. (mentioned several times)

- Utilize the roof for the tenants.
- The proposal is taller than the building uphill to the east.
- The 12th Ave elevation is one large, flat un-modulated wall.
- Create as much parking as possible on-site. Although it is good to see some parking, there should be more.
- There is a lack of parking in the neighborhood.
- The proposal has too many units. The density causes on-street parking deficiencies.
- The proposal will place the house to the north in shadow. This is not very neighborly.
- The proposed structure is too high on the 12th Ave. corner.
- What valid reason would the Board have to grant the departures?

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. The Board identified the Citywide Design Guidelines & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

The Neighborhood specific guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

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.**

Given the site's descending slope from the east, the Board requested a design option that recognizes both the topography and the lower scale buildings to the west and the change in zoning to single family (SF5000) to the south.

- A-2 Streetscape Compatibility. The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.**

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Retain or increase the width of sidewalks wherever feasible with consideration for bicycles creating a more comfortable environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.**
- Orient townhouse structures to provide pedestrian entrances to the sidewalk.**
- For buildings that span a block and face two streets, each street frontage should receive individual and detailed site planning as well as architectural design treatments to complement the established streetscape character. This is especially important for through streets and triangular shaped lots.**

- D. **Build at or near the edge of the sidewalk and restrict grade separations where commercial uses occupy the ground floor.**
- E. **Provide a shallow setback and a minor grade separation between the first floor and the sidewalk where residential uses occupy the ground floor; this will promote privacy and also accommodate entry porches and stoops.**
- F. **Place planting strips smartly to incorporate a more pleasing environment for all modes of transportation and incorporate LID interventions in the same space.**

Two portions of the façade, at this early stage of design, should be improved. The waste storage area should not occupy the west exterior wall at street level. The storage area ought to be located further into the garage’s interior. Another unit or larger residence ought to have presence on the street façade.

Place a window on the S. Holgate facade into the residential unit occupying the lowest level of the proposed structure to reduce the blank wall’s extent and engage the street. It will also provide the corner residential unit with additional natural light.

A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street. Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

The Board agreed with placing the primary entrance along Holgate St.

A-4 Human Activity. New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on 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.

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- A. **Redirect the number of windows and decks on proposed buildings that overlook neighboring residences.**
- B. **Step back upper floors or increase side and rear setbacks to pull windows farther away from neighboring residences.**
- C. **Stagger windows to not align with adjacent windows and minimize the impact of windows in living spaces that may infringe on the privacy of adjacent residents.**

The design of the court will need to be handled with sensitivity keeping in mind the residents and their open space to the north.

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-7 Residential Open Space. Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- A. Incorporate quasi-public open space into new residential development or redevelopment with special focus on corner landscape treatments and courtyard entries.
- B. Create substantial courtyard-style open space that is visually accessible to the public view.
- C. Set-back development where appropriate to preserve view corridors, particularly to mountains, water and skyline.
- D. Set back upper floors to allow solar access to the sidewalk and/or neighboring properties.
- E. Protect existing, healthy street trees.
- F. Site outdoor spaces to take advantage of as much sunlight as possible.

The Board liked the idea of the terraced rain garden and asked to see more design detail for the cistern.

Discussion focused on the appropriateness of creating primary open space that would generally lie within shadow.

- 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.**

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- A. Preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment in residential and commercial areas by providing for continuous sidewalks that are unencumbered by parked vehicles and are minimally interrupted by vehicular access within a block.
- B. Minimize the number and width of driveways and curb cuts.
- C. Incorporate bioretention cells into parking lot design in order to reduce the quantity of runoff reaching water treatment facilities and increase the quality of runoff that returns to the water table, and nearby lakes and rivers. Incorporating bioretention cells as a buffer between sidewalks and parking lots provide a functional and aesthetically pleasing border.

Due to the constraints of placing parking garage access on the alley, the Board agreed with the applicant's proposed use of 12th Ave for a vehicular entrance. Adjusting to the slope would have required using valuable space for a driveway ramp.

- A-10 Corner Lots. Building on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.**

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- A. Incorporate residential entries and special landscaping into corner lots by setting the structure back from the property lines at the corner.
- B. Provide for a prominent retail corner entry.
- C. Typical corner developments should provide: a main building entrance located at the corner; an entrance set back to soften the corner and enhance pedestrian

environment; and use of a hinge, bevel, notch, open bay or setback in the massing to reflect the special nature of the corner and draw attention to it.

- D. Given the angle of Beacon Avenue, there are several triangle lots located in North Beacon Hill. Typical triangle lots should provide: main building entrance oriented toward the sidewalk; additional landscape to soften angles; and parking oriented away from sidewalks with a buffer between the sidewalk and parking lot.

There is no inherent need to place added emphasis on the corner; however, at street level, avoiding a blank wall serves to engage the building with the activity along the two streets.

B. 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 near-by, less intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk, and scale between anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

Much of the North Beacon Hill business district is zoned for 40-foot tall mixed-use buildings. Most of the existing commercial structures in the area are one- and two-stories adjacent to single-family houses. Large, monolithic buildings are discouraged. Proper consideration of the scale, massing and detail of individual buildings will contribute to a project's compatibility with surrounding residential areas and a satisfying public environment.

As discussed in guidance A-1, the Board requested a new design alternative that echoes the change in grade and recognizes the smaller scale buildings to the south and west. The massing alternative should step down in height as it approaches the west.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

- C-1 **Architectural Context.** New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- A. To make new, larger development compatible with the surrounding architectural context, facade articulation and architectural detail are important considerations in mixed-use and multifamily residential buildings. When larger buildings replace several

small buildings, facade articulation should reflect the original platting pattern and reinforce the architectural rhythm established in the commercial core.

- B. New development should respond to several architectural features common in the North Beacon Hill business district to preserve and enhance pedestrian orientation and maintain an acceptable level of consistency with the existing architecture. To create cohesiveness on Beacon Hill, identifiable and exemplary architectural patterns should be reinforced. New elements can be introduced but a strong design connection should accompany it.

- 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. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- A. New multi-story developments are encouraged to consider methods to integrate a building's upper and lower levels. This is especially important in NC-40'-zoned areas. Mixed-use buildings are encouraged to create a building base that orients to the street and/or defines public space. This can be achieved by building the ground floor commercial level, and possibly one more level out to the front property line.
- B. Establish a building's overall appearance on a clear and pleasing set of proportions. A building should exhibit a sense of order. The use and repetition of architectural features and building materials, textures and colors can help create unity in a structure. Consider how the following can contribute to a building that exhibits a cohesive architectural concept: Facade modulation and articulation; Windows and fenestration patterns; Trim and moldings; Grilles and railings; Lighting and signage

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

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- A. Brick and Stone are the most common surface treatment in the commercial areas and are strongly encouraged.
- B. Signs should add interest to the street level environment. They can unify the overall architectural concept of the building, or provide unique identity for a commercial space within a larger mixed-use structure. Design signage that is appropriate for the scale, character and use of the project and surrounding area. Signs should be oriented and scaled for both pedestrians on sidewalks and vehicles on streets.

- 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.

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- A. Brick and Stone are the most common surface treatment in the commercial areas and are strongly encouraged. Below are some examples of bricks and stone used on Beacon Hill.**
- B. Signs should add interest to the street level environment. They can unify the overall architectural concept of the building, or provide unique identity for a commercial space within a larger mixed-use structure. Design signage that is appropriate for the scale, character and use of the project and surrounding area. Signs should be oriented and scaled for both pedestrians on sidewalks and vehicles on streets.**
- 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.**

The Board agreed that the garage door should be located close to the west property line to avoid creating a dark void in the façade and to ensure a safer environment.

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 balance between the entry court and the open space on the south and north respectively met with approval. Materials and detailing should emphasize the sequential flow between them. The open passage way linking the courts presents safety concerns, however. How the architect treats this breezeway will be an important consideration at future meetings.

- 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.**

See guidance for A-2 and A-10.

- D-3 Retaining Walls. Retaining walls near a public sidewalk that extend higher than eye level should be avoided where possible. Where higher retaining walls are unavoidable, they should be designed to reduce their impact on pedestrian comfort and to increase the visual interest along the streetscapes.**

The proposed terraced rain garden suggests that the landscape architect recognizes the potential presence of oversized retaining walls adjacent to a sidewalk.

- D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures. The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure**

should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape. Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.

See D-6 guidance.

- 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 front 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.

Locating the waste storage area away from the 12th Ave S. exterior wall will allow for expanded residential use and greater transparency at street level. The Board will consider the departure request for a smaller solid waste area based on modifications to its location.

- D-7 Personal Safety and Security.** Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- A. Defensible Space**
- B. Access Control**
- C. Surveillance**

The Board's concerns (see D-1 guidance) for the entry court and breezeway will need to be addressed. Design development of this sequence of spaces must ensure the safety of tenants, guests and pedestrians.

- D-8 Treatment of Alleys.** The design of alley entrances should enhance the pedestrian street front.

In wishing to locate vehicular access at S. 12th Ave, the applicant has proposed a narrow swath of green space between the alley and the proposed structure.

- D-12 Residential Entries and Transitions.** For residential projects in commercial zones, the space between the residential entry and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and a visually interesting street front for pedestrians. Residential buildings should enhance the character of the streetscape with small gardens, stoops and other elements that work to create a transition between the public sidewalk and private entry.

See Board guidance D-1 and D-7. The landscape plan shows gates at the entrance of the breezeway. How this space and the open entry court are lit and made to feel secure are important considerations.

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.

North Beacon Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- A. Give purpose to plantings by incorporating multiple functions of the plantings, i.e., a planting can be a bioretention cell, provide shelter, shade and habitat while enhancing the overall aesthetic of Beacon Hill.**
- B. Native plants to the Pacific Northwest are encouraged because of their proven ability to perform well in our climate and their regional cultural significance.**
- C. Consider adding a focal element, for instance, an art piece to outdoor space.**
- D. Retain significant trees whenever possible.**

Refinement of the landscape plan should proceed. Guidance noted above emphasizes the importance of the entry, breezeway and north court in terms of relationship with adjacent properties, safety issues, and consistency of architectural concept.

E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions. The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be 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(s). The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the applicant asked the Board to consider the following departures: allow street rather than alley access for vehicles and reduce the amount of space for the waste storage area. The Board responded to the latter by requesting that the storage be relocated away from the 12th Ave. S. exterior wall.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Board recommended that the project should return to the Board for an additional EDG meeting.