



# City of Seattle

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

DESIGN  
REVIEW

## FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3018001

Address: 836 NE 67<sup>th</sup> St

Applicant: Ryan Dingle, Skidmore Janette Architecture, for Chad Duncan

Date of Meeting: Monday, July 13, 2015

Board Members Present: Ivana Begley, Chair  
Eric Blank  
Laura Lenss  
Blake Williams  
Martine Zettle

DPD Staff Present: Michael Dorcy

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Midrise

Nearby Zones: (North) Midrise  
(South) Midrise  
(East) NC3-65  
(West) Midrise

Lot Area: 6,174 SF



**Current Development:**

The site is currently occupied by two single-family structures.

**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

The immediate neighborhood is a mix of single family and multi-family developments, with a marked trend toward multi-family developments in recent years. A large multi-family project (Mack Urban, with 260 residential units) is being constructed within the same block, at the corner of 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and NE 67<sup>th</sup> Street It is expected that the trend will continue, given the arrival of light-rail mass transit with a future station close by. There is no predominating architectural character in the area.

**Access:**

Access to the site is from NE 67<sup>th</sup> Street only. There is no alley intervening between NE 67<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 68<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:**

None.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The goals of the project, as explained by the applicant team, are: to provide workforce housing for those relying on transportation modes other than individual automobiles, within easy walking distance to and from the proposed light rail station and to and from existing shops and eateries along the NE Roosevelt Way corridor. The project will focus on providing pedestrian access that will thoughtfully engage the street and enliven it, while capturing for residents territorial views to the west of the site.

The proposal is to build a 7 story residential apartment building, containing 76 units, on a 6,174 square foot lot. No parking for motorized vehicles will be provided.

**RECOMMENDATION July 13, 2015**

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3018001) 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).

The packet is also available to view in the file, 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)

## **DESIGN DEVELOPMENT**

At the Early Design Guidance meeting on November 3, 2014, the design team presented 3 schemes, each with pedestrian entries off NE 67<sup>th</sup> Street, internal garbage/recycling storage, internal bike storage and with internal circulation via a central double-loaded corridor. The schemes differed from one another primarily based on their entry location and sequencing, relationship to the ground plane, vertical distribution of the floors, and with schemes #2 and #3, a sliding of portions of the overall mass of the buildings to or away from the north and south property lines. The Board expressed concerns regarding the depth below grade of the basement units and the limitations of direct sunlight illuminating these units.

The scheme proposed at the Recommendation meeting reflected a modification of the third scheme, lifting the first level out of the ground plane while allowing for an entry that is level with the sidewalk along NE 67<sup>th</sup> Street, another major concern expressed by the Board at the EDG meeting. It also incorporated elements of the second scheme from the EDG meeting, notably the front decks and suggested materiality of a more substantial brick treatment which the Board thought more promising than the brick frame of scheme 3. While the scheme proposed at the Recommendation meeting manifested the overall massing of scheme 3 from the EDG meeting, including the eastern portion of the building pushed further south to create an entry court at the southwest corner of the site, the proposal removed the earlier frame element, did a better job of knitting the lower and upper elements of the structure together while the decks that had been a component of the second scheme served to provide a horizontal clasp across the front façade.

The new proposed scheme would create a building entry that is level with the sidewalk, a consideration of primary importance to the Board. The revised proposal would require two departures, from SMC 23.45.518.H.3 and SMC 23.45.518.B. (See “Development Standard Departures,” below, p.5.)

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Comments received by the Department were generally related to the lack of vehicular parking, the small size of the proposed units, issues over which the Board has no purview, and the way the proposed structure at 7 stories, was out of proportion to the existing older, single family structures in the area. One member of the community who spoke at the meeting requested that the Board consider how this structure would respond to other new development, in particular if the site directly to the west were to be developed. He noted, among other things, that the proposed use of brick was a welcomed element of the project and that he was in

support of the departure for the brick at the southeast corner to extend into the required setback.

## **PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS**

At the Early Design Guidance meeting the Board had identified four areas of focus for their deliberations: the basement units, the overall massing and exterior design, the building entry, and the requested departures.

- Minimize basement living units and window wells
- Pursue the overall massing indicated in Scheme #3, but seriously explore working into the design the decks and materiality shown in Scheme #2
- Provide a direct connection between the sidewalk grade and the entry and one free of physical obstructions
- While the Board is open to a massing shift that pushes back either the east or west half of the structure to provide an entry court, they would like to see evidence of a serious exploration into providing a visual connection between the entry courtyard and Roosevelt Way NE

**Basement Units:** It was noted by one of the Board members that basement units can be affordable and an important way to provide for a variety of workforce housing possibilities. But it was also noted that the lack of sunlight, especially for units located deep below grade, was a real design challenge. The Board members agreed that the revised scheme had succeeded in lifting the lowest units substantially higher than had earlier been proposed.

**Overall Massing & Exterior Design:** The massing and modulation offered in both schemes #2 and #3 were much preferable to scheme #1. It had been noted that the decks shown on the front façade of scheme #2 added a great deal of texture and interest to the front façade. While acknowledging that Scheme #3 showed the greatest success in overall massing, the Board did not respond favorably to the brick frame element. In proceeding with design development, the applicant was advised to look to elements of Scheme #2, notably the decks and the suggested materiality of the building, for elements that could enhance Scheme #3. The Board liked the way the vertical elements on scheme #3 knitted the upper and lower portions of the structure, and noted that terminating them below the top floor was a deft move in treatment of the scale of the building.

**Entry:** Having a clear relationship between the sidewalk and the building entry was of vital importance to the Board and the shifts in this regard were warmly received. In the revised scheme there would be no intervening retaining wall or other unwanted obstructions.

**Visual Connection to Roosevelt Way NE:** The strong brick element at the southeast corner of the proposal enhances the connection to Roosevelt Way NE and the path to and from the light rail station.

Additionally, the Board thought that the frontal position of the garbage and recycle storage space was good choice; the bike storage location was well thought out. There was some concern that the lobby space might require further activation. The outdoor amenity space at the northeast corner of the property would probably need further thought in terms of safety and comfort; some additional lighting, including bollard lighting was suggested, as was additional low-level lighting for security and safety along the east side of the structure.

The Board favored adding high windows that would admit light, and possibly air, to units facing both east and west on levels 6 and 7 where blank facades are currently shown. They would enliven the facades and the affected residents.

Possibly the most protracted of the Board's discussions was related to the balconies along the front, south-facing facade. At the EDG meeting one of the Board members had noted that the decks shown on the front façade of scheme #2 not only added a great deal of texture and interest to the front façade but, as common decks connected to the circulation spine, they would not only embolden the façade but enliven the overall tenant experience. They would encourage the conceptualization of the hall space as a true amenity space. Ideally they would be adjuncts to the hallway amenity on each of the corresponding floors. If not in that role, the question would arise, to whom do the balconies belong. It was generally thought that the balconies might function best, if not an adjunct to the hallway amenity, were they to belong to a single unit on each floor, with high windows provided for the adjoining unit that did not enjoy the use of the balconies. It was generally believed that dividers on the balconies would be a mistake. Should the balconies be left as private amenity areas, rules should be in place to prevent storage of bikes and BBQ grills, and a more solid railing system should be contemplated to obscure the sight of unwanted clutter.

## **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

The following Departures from development standards were requested:

1. **SMC 23.45.518.B (Separations and Setbacks):** The Code requires a rear setback of 15 feet from rear lot line. The applicant proposes a five-foot encroachment into the setback where one half of the massing of the building slides back from the other.
2. **SMC 23.45.518.H.3 (Separations & Setbacks):** The Code requires that Bay Windows and other projections in the side setback above 42 feet in height can project a maximum of 2 feet into the setback. The applicant proposes a 1 ½ foot additional projection into the side setback above 42 feet.

The Board members agreed that the requested departures would enhance the project, enable a better massing of the building, and better meet the intent of the design guidelines. The Board

recommended approval of the requested departures 5-0. They also recommended approval of the proposal, with conditions, 5-0.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS and CONDITIONS**

As conditions of their recommendations of approval, the Board specified the following:

- The dark brick should be bonded with a relatively dark mortar.
- Provide a high performance coating on metal elements to improve durability and maintain the integrity of the material.
- The horizontal lap siding shall have an exposure or reveal of 8 inches.
- Provide additional low-level security lighting at the NE corner amenity area and along the east façade.
- Provide high windows in the sleeping areas of the upper-level units.
- The south-facing decks should be either common amenity areas accessed from the hallways or single unit private amenities.