



# City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development  
Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN  
REVIEW

## RECOMMENDATION OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3022596, 3020898, & 3023474

Address: 1638, 1640, 1644 20<sup>th</sup> Ave

Applicant: Julian Weber, JW Architects for Isola Homes

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, March 08, 2017

Board Members Present: Natalie Gualy, Chair  
Barbara Busetti  
Curtis Bigelow  
Dan Foltz  
Christina Orr-Cahall  
Amy Taylor

Board Members Absent: None

SDCI Staff Present: Josh Johnson

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial (NC2-40) & Low Rise 3 (LR3)

Nearby Zones:  
 (North) NC2-40  
 (South) LR3  
 (East) Residential Small Lot Tandem/Cottage (RSL/TC)  
 (West) LR3

Lot Area: 14,991 sq. ft.



**Current Development:**

Two duplex units are located on the subject properties.

**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

Madison Street is a commercial corridor and a principal arterial that traverses through the neighborhood from southwest to northeast. In general, NC zoning is present along Madison with Lowrise zones and then Single-family zoning radiating out from the commercial street. Two story single-family residences are located directly to the east. Neighborhood Commercial zoning to the north contains a two-story office/commercial building. To the west lies a large church complex home to Mt. Zion. To the south is a vacant lot.

**Access:**

The site is served by an existing sidewalk system. Vehicular access is provided from 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The northern home has a curb cut for a two-car garage.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:**

No ECA's are present.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed project is comprised of ten rowhomes, five townhomes, and two live/work units. 15-17 parking spaces are proposed in an interior courtyard and garages.

The design packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3022596, 3020898, & 3023474) at this website:

<http://www.seattle.gov/DPD/aboutus/news/events/DesignReview/SearchPastReviews/default.aspx>

The packet is also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at SDCl:

**Mailing Public Resource Center**

**Address:** 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000  
P.O. Box 34019  
Seattle, WA 98124-4019N

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

<b>EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE April 27, 2016</b>
---

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Members of the public offered comments:

- Units are not wide enough.
- Grade difference between 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> may create the feeling of units looming over nearby homes. This could be exacerbated by the presence of roof decks.

All public comments submitted in writing for this project can be viewed using the following link and entering the project number: <http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/edms/>

## 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 April 27, 2016

#### 1. Neighborhood Connection.

- a. The Board acknowledged the public's concern about grade changes between 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Street. Site sections with dimensioned distances to adjacent structures should be included in the recommendation packet clarifying the topographic/spatial relationship between the subject properties and residences to the east. (CS1-B&C, CS2-A&B)
- b. The Board was excited at the prospect of rowhomes lining 20<sup>th</sup> Street down the block. They thought this project could establish a positive precedent for a regularized rowhouse pattern. (CS2-C)

#### 2. Amenity Area. The Board offered the following guidance regarding the open spaces areas and design:

- a. The grass-crete court at the center of the project could create a desirable gathering place for residents and should be comprised of well-designed landscape materials to define open space and vehicle access. (DC3-A&B, and DC4-D)
- b. The amenity space at the south end of the project should be more connected to the central grass-crete court to convey the sense of a larger open space. (PL1-A & DC3-C)
- c. Pedestrian access through the parking lot needs to be well defined and provide a clear way for residents to reach units at the rear of the project. (PL2-D)

#### 3. Massing. The Board preferred Option 2 with the departures presented with Option 3. They felt Option 2 better grouped residences and amenities. The Board also provided the following guidance:

- a. Gabled roofs, present on two proposed buildings in the southwest corner of option 3, muddle the cohesiveness of the overall development's design. The Board agreed that flat roofs should be maintained throughout the project. (DC2-B)
- b. Future renderings should contain cars to clarify vehicular circulation dimensions and usable open space. (DC1-B&C)
- c. The Board stressed that the massing of the penthouse stairs should be reduced. (CS2-D)
- d. The Board wanted to see the use of high-quality materials such as brick and wood (DC4-A)

- e. The applicant should strive to configure the more active living spaces such as the living room and dining room uses to ground level to increase interaction with the street. (PL3-A&B)

<b>RECOMMENDATION March 8, 2017</b>
-------------------------------------

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Members of the public offered comments:

- The live/work units need guarantees that they will be used for a commercial business.
- Concerned that the live/work and residential units could be subdivided internally for Air BandB.
- The project is proposing a fence between the existing commercial at the north and the applicant's live/work building where there is minimum setback. The fence should be located where the project abuts a parking lot along the north property line.

All public comments submitted in writing for this project can be viewed using the following link and entering the project number: <http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/edms/>

<b>PRIORITIES &amp; BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
---

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.

**RECOMMENDATION March 8, 2017**

**1. Response to EDG:**

- a. The Board was supportive of how the project transitioned from the commercial building/zoning to the north by using a two-story application of brick on the live/work building. The Board also liked the projects use of hardie lap siding for the residential units. (CS2-D-3)
- b. Overall, the Board was supportive of the contemporary design and noted that the asymmetrical composition was successful. (DC2)
- c. The Board liked the building's proximity to the street and felt the units would begin a strong rowhouse aesthetic for 20<sup>th</sup> Street. (PL3-B)
- d. The Board complimented the applicant on reducing the appearance and minimized the massing of the penthouse stairs. (DC2-A-2)
- e. The Board agreed that the design of the east elevation was well considered, noting that stepping back of the third story and roof deck responded well to the single-family neighborhood. (CS2-D-5)

- f. The Board noted the courtyard design responded well to their guidance about tying the parking court to the southern amenity space and applauded the use of differing types of paving to assist in wayfinding. (DC3)

## **2. Design:**

- a. The Board had concerns with the perception of bulk with the live/work. The Board felt the building has the appearance of two different structures stacked due to proportion and the stark contrast between materials. The Board suggested the solid fifth floor parapet include an open railing and the building's brick base extend up to form the second-floor railing. (DC2-A-2)
- b. The Board liked the additional rear setback at the eastern property line to allow for more buffering to nearby residences and also approved of the reduced setback at 20<sup>th</sup> Street. (CS2-B, CSC2-C)
- c. The Board noted the trash enclosure being near the street should be screened. The enclosure was not depicted. The Board recommended a condition for the applicant to work with staff on a cedar material stained so the color matches the project. (DC1-C-4)
- d. The Board noticed the bike parking area could be blocked if a car is parked in the adjacent stall. They recommended a condition for the design to be adjusted to make sure bike parking is functional with cars parked in stalls. (DC1-C)

## **3. Materials:**

- a. Responding to public comment, the Board recommended a condition for fencing where the project borders a parking lot to the northeast. The Board felt this would enhance site security. (CS2-D-5)
- b. The Board liked the use of brick and the overall color palette. Some members of the Board liked the dark purple while others asked for more vibrant colors. The Board did not reach a majority consensus on this issue. (DC4)
- c. Clarifying questions from the Board revealed that grasscrete will not be used for north/south aisle of the parking court. The applicant explained it would not function well during gatherings. The applicant stated they would still use an alternative type of paving. The Board accepted the non grasscrete material at this location. (DC1-C-3, DC3-B)

## **4. Entry Sequence:**

- a. The Board noted the planters in front of the rowhomes would provide adequate transition between the public realm of the sidewalk and the residential entry. (PL3-B, PL3-A-3)
- b. The Board like the use of solid doors for the rowhomes for the added privacy and security. (PL3-B-1)

## DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines identified by the Board as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. 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-1. Sun and Wind:** Take advantage of solar exposure and natural ventilation. Use local wind patterns and solar gain to reduce the need for mechanical ventilation and heating where possible.

**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.

##### **CS1-C Topography**

**CS1-C-1. Land Form:** Use natural topography and desirable landforms to inform project design.

**CS1-C-2. Elevation Changes:** Use the existing site topography when locating structures and open spaces on the site.

#### **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-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces**

**CS2-B-1. Site Characteristics:** Allow characteristics of sites to inform the design, especially where the street grid and topography create unusually shaped lots that can add distinction to the building massing.

**CS2-B-2. Connection to the Street:** Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and public realm.

**CS2-B-3. Character of Open Space:** Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces.

##### **CS2-C Relationship to the Block**

**CS2-C-1. Corner Sites:** Corner sites can serve as gateways or focal points; both require careful detailing at the first three floors due to their high visibility from two or more streets and long distances.

**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-C-3. Full Block Sites:** Break up long facades of full-block buildings to avoid a monolithic presence. Provide detail and human scale at street-level, and include repeating elements to add variety and rhythm to the façade and overall building design.

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

**CS2-D-1. Existing Development and Zoning:** Review the height, bulk, and scale of neighboring buildings as well as the scale of development anticipated by zoning for the area to determine an appropriate complement and/or transition.

**CS2-D-2. Existing Site Features:** Use changes in topography, site shape, and vegetation or structures to help make a successful fit with adjacent properties.

**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.

## **PUBLIC LIFE**

**PL1 Connectivity: Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.**

#### **PL1-A Network of Open Spaces**

**PL1-A-1. Enhancing Open Space:** Design the building and open spaces to positively contribute to a broader network of open spaces throughout the neighborhood.

**PL1-A-2. Adding to Public Life:** Seek opportunities to foster human interaction through an increase in the size and quality of project-related open space available for public life.

**PL2 Walkability: Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.**

#### **PL2-D Wayfinding**

**PL2-D-1. Design as Wayfinding:** Use design features as a means of wayfinding wherever possible.

**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-1. Design Objectives:** Design primary entries to be obvious, identifiable, and distinctive with clear lines of sight and lobbies visually connected to the street.

**PL3-A-2. Common Entries:** Multi-story residential buildings need to provide privacy and security for residents but also be welcoming and identifiable to visitors.

**PL3-A-3. Individual Entries:** Ground-related housing should be scaled and detailed appropriately to provide for a more intimate type of entry.

**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-1. Security and Privacy:** Provide security and privacy for residential buildings through the use of a buffer or semi-private space between the development and the street or neighboring buildings.

**PL3-B-2. Ground-level Residential:** Privacy and security issues are particularly important in buildings with ground-level housing, both at entries and where windows are located overlooking the street.

**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.

**PL3-B-4. Interaction:** Provide opportunities for interaction among residents and neighbors.

## DESIGN CONCEPT

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

#### **DC1-B Vehicular Access and Circulation**

**DC1-B-1. Access Location and Design:** Choose locations for vehicular access, service uses, and delivery areas that minimize conflict between vehicles and non-motorists wherever possible. Emphasize use of the sidewalk for pedestrians, and create safe and attractive conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.

**DC1-B-2. Facilities for Alternative Transportation:** Locate facilities for alternative transportation in prominent locations that are convenient and readily accessible to expected users.

#### **DC1-C Parking and Service Uses**

**DC1-C-1. Below-Grade Parking:** Locate parking below grade wherever possible. Where a surface parking lot is the only alternative, locate the parking in rear or side yards, or on lower or less visible portions of the site.

**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-3. Multiple Uses:** Design parking areas to serve multiple uses such as children's play space, outdoor gathering areas, sports courts, woonerf, or common space in multifamily projects.



**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-1. Site Characteristics and Uses:** Arrange the mass of the building taking into consideration the characteristics of the site and the proposed uses of the building and its open space.

**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.

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

**DC3-A Building-Open Space Relationship**

**DC3-A-1. Interior/Exterior Fit:** Develop an open space concept in conjunction with the architectural concept to ensure that interior and exterior spaces relate well to each other and support the functions of the development.

**DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities**

**DC3-B-1. Meeting User Needs:** Plan the size, uses, activities, and features of each open space to meet the needs of expected users, ensuring each space has a purpose and function.

**DC3-B-2. Matching Uses to Conditions:** Respond to changing environmental conditions such as seasonal and daily light and weather shifts through open space design and/or programming of open space activities.

**DC3-B-3. Connections to Other Open Space:** Site and design project-related open spaces to connect with, or enhance, the uses and activities of other nearby public open space where appropriate.

**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.

**DC3-C Design**

**DC3-C-1. Reinforce Existing Open Space:** Where a strong open space concept exists in the neighborhood, reinforce existing character and patterns of street tree planting,

buffers or treatment of topographic changes. Where no strong patterns exist, initiate a strong open space concept that other projects can build upon in the future.

**DC3-C-2. Amenities/Features:** Create attractive outdoor spaces suited to the uses envisioned for the project.

**DC3-C-3. Support Natural Areas:** Create an open space design that retains and enhances onsite natural areas and connects to natural areas that may exist off-site and may provide habitat for wildlife.

**DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.**

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

**DC4-D-1. Choice of Plant Materials:** Reinforce the overall architectural and open space design concepts through the selection of landscape materials.

**DC4-D-2. Hardscape Materials:** Use exterior courtyards, plazas, and other hard surfaced areas as an opportunity to add color, texture, and/or pattern and enliven public areas through the use of distinctive and durable paving materials. Use permeable materials wherever possible.

**DC4-D-3. Long Range Planning:** Select plants that upon maturity will be of appropriate size, scale, and shape to contribute to the site as intended.

**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(s) will be based on the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guidelines priorities and achieve a better overall project 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 Recommendation the following departures were requested:

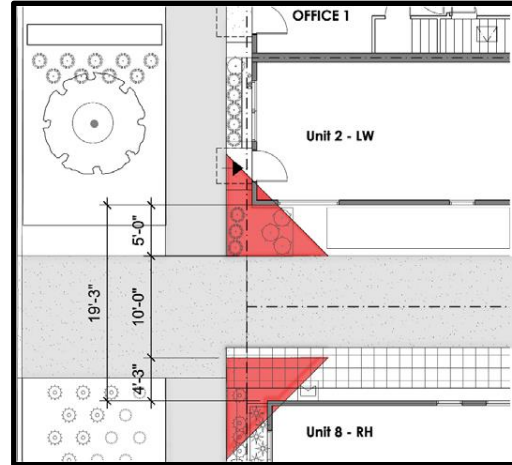
1. **Driveway Width (SMC 23.53.025.D):** Vehicle access easements serving ten or more residential units, easement width shall be a minimum of 32' and provide a surfaced roadway at least 24' wide.

The applicant proposes a 10' curb cut and 14' drive. Hardscape of drive to consist of 9' of concrete and 4' of pedestrian walkway made of pavers.

The Board unanimously approved the departure request as the reduced aisle width presents a more continuous wall of building deemphasize the automobile's presence at the street. The resulting design better meets the intent of Design Guideline PL2-D Walkability and Wayfinding and DC1-C-2 Reduce Visual Impacts of Parking Lots.

2. **Sight Triangle (SMC 23.54.030.G.1):** The Code requires a sight triangle be provided on both sides of the driveway be kept clear of any obstruction for a distance of 10 feet from the intersection as shown in red on the right.

The applicant proposes to encroach into both sides of the sight triangle by 1.5' on unit 8 and 3' for Unit 2 and the trash enclosure.



The Board unanimously approved the departure as strict application of the code would require one of the live/work and rowhouse units to be setback further than the existing commercial building to the north. This would reduce the continuous rowhouse appearance the Board wanted to see for 20<sup>th</sup> Street allowing for interaction opportunities for residents of the rowhomes, businesses in the live/work units, and neighbors, the intent of Design Guideline PL3-B-4 Residential Edges - Interaction.

3. **Setbacks for Commercial Lots Abutting Residential Zones (SMC 23.47A.014.B.1, 2, and 3):** The Code requires commercial buildings to be setback 10' for portions of structures above 13' in height when abutting residentially zoned property. Residential structures along a side lot lint shall be setback at 15' for portions of the structure above 13' in height.

The applicant proposed 9' 8" for the commercial structure setback and 10' for the residential structure.

The Board unanimously approved the departure as it allows more open space to occur along the side and rear lots lines providing additional buffering for adjacent uses and better meets Design Guideline CS2-B Respect for Adjacent Sites.

4. **Front Setback (SMC 23.45.518.A):** The Code requires a 5' front setback for rowhouse developments.

The applicant proposed a 2' setback for units 8-12.

The Board unanimously approved the departure as it allows for more setback on the eastern part of the project where it address and transitions to single-family residences in response to Design Guideline CS2-D-3 which advocates for the appropriate transition to less intense zones.

## **BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the Recommendation meeting, the Board recommended approval of the project with conditions.

Recommendations: The recommendations summarized below were based on the plans and models submitted at the March 8, 2017 meeting. Design, siting or architectural details not specifically identified or altered in these recommendations are expected to remain as presented in the plans and other drawings available at the public meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities, and reviewing the plans and renderings, the Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design with one condition and the requested development standard departures from the requirements of the Land Use Code (listed below). The Board recommends the following CONDITIONS for the project. (Authority referred in the letter and number in parenthesis):

Prior to MUP Decision modify the plan set subject to the following conditions:

1. Revise the design of the trash enclosure to match the color of materials with project's overall palette. (DC4)
2. Revise the bike parking area so it is accessible while cars are parked in the adjacent stall. (DC1-C)
3. Include fencing along the northern property boundary where the project abuts a neighboring parking lot. (CS2-D-5 & PL3-B-1)