Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections

CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF
THE SEATTLE DEPARTMENT OF CONSTRUCTION AND INSPECTIONS

Project Number: 3032363-LU

Applicant Name: Ray Gontarz

Address of Proposal: 1772-74 Alki Avenue SW

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow two, three-story townhouse buildings (five units total). Parking for eight vehicles proposed. Existing buildings to be demolished. Administrative Early Design Guidance done under 3032483-EG.

The following approvals are required:

Administrative Design Review (Seattle Municipal Code 23.41)

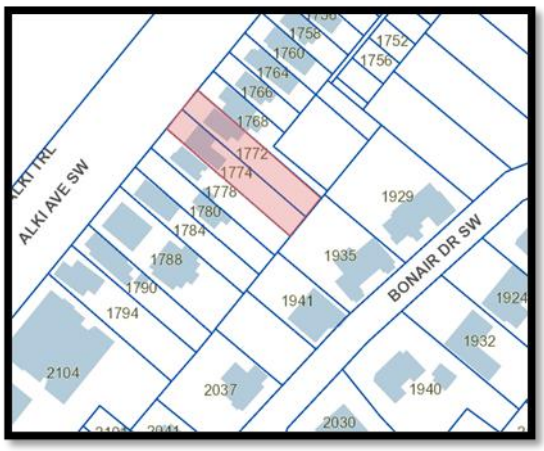
Shoreline Substantial Development Permit

ECA Variances – to allow intrusion into a steep slope buffer and to allow a less than minimum required front yard setback. (SMC 25.09)

SITE AND VICINITY

Site Zone: Multifamily Lowrise 2 [LR2 (M)]

Zoning Pattern: The LR2 (M) zoning continues north, west, and south of the site. The zoning transitions to Single Family (SF5000) to the east. A portion of the site is located within the UR (Urban Residential) shoreline environment.



Environmental Critical Areas: Steep Slope (ECA1), Potential Slide (ECA2), Liquefaction (ECA5), and Known Slide (ECA8).

Current and Surrounding Development; Neighborhood Character: The subject site, located in the Alki neighborhood in West Seattle, comprises two adjacent lots, each containing a one-story, single-family residence. The adjacent property to the north is developed with a two-story triplex; the adjacent property to the south is currently developed with a two-story, single-family residence, which has issued permits for redevelopment into a three-story townhouse structure under an unrelated application (Record No. 6677448-CN). The adjacent property to the east is visually separated from the subject site by a heavily vegetated and very steep slope. This lot contains a two-story single-family residence.

The surrounding development is varied, due in part to changes in zoning along Alki Avenue SW that allow for denser developments. Taller structures up to six stories in height are common as well as modest, one-to-two-story single-family residences. No one architectural style dominates; however, some common architectural themes can be found, including large glazing oriented towards Puget Sound and street-facing balconies and decks.

Public Comment:

The public comment period ended on June 26, 2019. In addition to the comments received through the Design Review process, SDCI received one comment recommending that the project be required to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

I. ANALYSIS – DESIGN REVIEW

The design packet includes information presented to SDCI, and is available online by entering the record number 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 SDCI:

Mailing Address: **Public Resource Center**
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

ADMINISTRATIVE EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE March 11, 2019

PUBLIC COMMENT

The public comment period for the project began on January 3, 2019. No comments were received.

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

PRIORITIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, Staff provides the following siting and design guidance.

1. **Massing:**
    a. Staff found the massing from Option 1, the applicant's preferred option, to be the most successful of the three options, but identified some site planning issues that are better addressed in Options 2 and 3. Utilize the massing from Option 1 as a starting point while addressing the site planning issues described in further detail below. (CS2-D-1, DC2-C-1)
    b. All three massing options show the street-facing building without stair penthouses at the roof level. This design helps to reduce perceived height from the street, reduce shading in the shared driveway area, and enhance views of Puget Sound from the roof decks atop the rear building. Retain this layout in the MUP plan set. (CS1-B-2, PL1-C-1)

2. Architectural Concept:

a. The inclusion of balconies and large glazing on the street-facing façade respond well to the existing neighborhood context and provide significant opportunities for scenic views from the new residences. As the project is further developed, look to surrounding properties to determine the size, shape, and arrangement of glazing that will be most compatible with existing and future developments. (CS3-A-1)

b. The ground floor of the street-facing building includes a significant recess adjacent to the driveway, which may be a response to code requirements. This modulation does not read as an intentional design feature and instead creates an awkward void that is not tied to any programmatic or larger design concept. While modulation typically adds value to a design, these moves should be in service of a larger architectural concept. Continue developing this street-facing façade to fully integrate any development standards into a cohesive and balanced architectural concept. (DC2-B-1, DC2-C-2)

c. The relationship between the entries for the rear building and the driveway requires further development. Entries need to be easily identifiable, attractive, and designed with a sense of separation from the vehicular circulation area. Raised entries are encouraged. High quality paving and garage door materials are needed to soften the impacts of having entries oriented around the driveway. Incorporate landscaping to the maximum extent possible. (PL3-A, DC1-B-1)

d. If fencing is proposed, include elevations both with and without fencing shown. Fences in the front setback are discouraged; if fencing is desired, it should be semi-transparent and limited to a maximum height of four feet. (CS2-B-2, CS3-A-1)

e. Interior uses have been arranged with the most active uses facing the street and circulation located at the rear. This arrangement creates natural surveillance of the street, allows for larger glazing on the primary façade, and reduces perceived height by locating stair penthouses away from the street. Retain this (or similar) arrangement of interior uses in the MUP plan set. (PL2-B-1, DC2-A-1)

3. Service Uses:

a. Staff supports the driveway location proposed in Option 2 as it allows for retention of the Exceptional Tree and allows for more on-street parking to be preserved. The applicant is encouraged to contact the adjacent property owner to the south to discuss the possibility of obtaining an easement for a shared driveway. This would allow for more developable area on the subject lot and would minimize impacts to the public right-of-way. (CS1-D-1, DC1-B-1, DC1-C-1, DC1-C-2)

b. Pedestrians accessing the rear building should have an intuitive and safe path from the sidewalk. Separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic and use visual cues, such as paving material, to differentiate between the two. (PL2-D-1, DC1-B-1)

c. Bike parking is not shown. Ensure that bike parking is located in a convenient, secure, and easily navigable location. (PL4-B-2)

4. Open Space:

a. Staff does not support the removal of the Exceptional Tree at the front of the property. It is recommended that the applicant refine Option 1 to include retention of the tree. Study alternatives, including a parking reduction (SMC 25.11.070.A.3) or additional departures as a means of retaining the tree. (CS1-D-1, DC4-D-4)

b. The proposal lacks any common amenity area for residents. Identify opportunities for shared space to encourage social interaction between neighbors. (PL3-B-4, DC3-B-4)

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION February 27, 2020

PUBLIC COMMENT

The public comment period for the project began on May 28, 2019. No design-related comments were received.

One purpose of the design review process is for the City to receive comments from the public that help to identify feedback and concerns about the site and design concept, identify applicable citywide and neighborhood design guidelines of highest priority to the site and explore conceptual design, siting alternatives and eventual architectural design. Concerns with off-street parking, traffic and construction impacts are reviewed as part of the environmental review conducted by SDCI and are not part of this review.

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

PRIORITIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, Staff provides the following siting and design guidance.

1. **Architectural Concept and Materials:**
    a. Overall, the project has responded well to the guidance provided at EDG. The staggered form adds architectural interest and reduces the perceived bulk from the public realm, and the large glazing and street-facing balconies are consistent with established patterns in the Alki neighborhood. (CS3-A)
    b. Staff recommends approval of the proposed wood cladding which adds texture and visual interest to the façade. The vertical orientation of the wood helps to balance the width of the façade, reducing the squatness of the primary massing. (DC2-D, DC4-A)
    c. The vehicular tunnel through the street-facing building is an unusual condition that requires further detailing to be successfully integrated into the design. Materials need to be durable and easy to clean and their application needs to be consistent with the overall architectural concept. Staff recommends a condition for the applicant to continue working with the Land Use reviewer on the material selection and application in this area. (DC2-B-1, DC2-C-2, DC4-A)
2. **Service Uses:**
    a. The southern facades include a recessed enclosure for waste storage receptacles at the exterior of the garage. These locations degrade the pedestrian experience and complicate the façade. Staff recommends a condition to internalize these waste storage areas. Staff also encourages locating the other waste receptacles, currently proposed near the northern property line, within their respective garages. (DC1-C-4)
    b. The recessed entries for units in the rear building provide some separation from vehicular traffic, improving pedestrian safety. (DC1-B-1)
3. **Open Space and Landscaping:**
    a. At EDG, Staff noted the lack of any common amenity area which greatly limits opportunities for social interaction between neighbors. Citing space limitations on the site, the applicant has not introduced any common amenity areas. Staff recommends a condition to provide some amount of common area for residents. This area does not

need to meet the code definition of "common amenity" to be effective. Relocating waste receptacles to individual garages, as recommended above, would open a small area on the northern side of the lot for a bench or other feature that can serve this purpose. (PL3-B-4, DC3-B-4)

b. Staff continues to recommend approval of the efforts made to retain the exceptional tree at the front of the lot. (CS1-D-1)

4. Wayfinding:

a. The tunnel through the front building is eye-catching and therefore may unintentionally draw pedestrians to use this route for access to the rear building. Staff recommends a condition to improve wayfinding and pedestrian safety by highlighting the pedestrian path through some secondary architectural detail, such as a trellis, signage, or canopy. (PL2-D, DC1-B-1, DC4-D-2)

b. To further enhance wayfinding and improve the separation between pedestrian and vehicular traffic, Staff recommends a condition to use the same hardscape treatment across the entire pedestrian path. (PL2-D, DC1-B-1, DC4-D-2)

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

At the time of the RECOMMENDATION review, no departures were requested. A front setback reduction is requested as part of the applicant's Environmentally Critical Area Variance application.

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The Citywide guidelines recognized by Staff as Priority Guidelines are identified above. All guidelines remain applicable and are summarized below. 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-A Energy Use

CS1-A-1. Energy Choices: At the earliest phase of project development, examine how energy choices may influence building form, siting, and orientation, and factor in the findings when making siting and design decisions.

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.

CS1-D Plants and Habitat

CS1-D-1. On-Site Features: Incorporate on-site natural habitats and landscape elements into project design and connect those features to existing networks of open spaces and natural habitats wherever possible. Consider relocating significant trees and vegetation if retention is not feasible.

CS1-D-2. Off-Site Features: Provide opportunities through design to connect to off-site habitats such as riparian corridors or existing urban forest corridors. Promote continuous habitat, where possible, and increase interconnected corridors of urban forest and habitat where possible.

CS1-E Water

CS1-E-1. Natural Water Features: If the site includes any natural water features, consider ways to incorporate them into project design, where feasible

CS1-E-2. Adding Interest with Project Drainage: Use project drainage systems as opportunities to add interest to the site through water-related design elements.

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.

CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes

CS3-A-1. Fitting Old and New Together: Create compatibility between new projects, and existing architectural context, including historic and modern designs, through building articulation, scale and proportion, roof forms, detailing, fenestration, and/or the use of complementary materials.

CS3-A-2. Contemporary Design: Explore how contemporary designs can contribute to the development of attractive new forms and architectural styles; as expressed through use of new materials or other means.

CS3-A-3. Established Neighborhoods: In existing neighborhoods with a well-defined architectural character, site and design new structures to complement or be compatible with the architectural style and siting patterns of neighborhood buildings.

CS3-A-4. Evolving Neighborhoods: In neighborhoods where architectural character is evolving or otherwise in transition, explore ways for new development to establish a positive and desirable context for others to build upon in the future.

CS3-B Local History and Culture

CS3-B-1. Placemaking: Explore the history of the site and neighborhood as a potential placemaking opportunity. Look for historical and cultural significance, using neighborhood groups and archives as resources.

CS3-B-2. Historical/Cultural References: Reuse existing structures on the site where feasible as a means of incorporating historical or cultural elements into the new project.

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.

PL1-B Walkways and Connections

PL1-B-1. Pedestrian Infrastructure: Connect on-site pedestrian walkways with existing public and private pedestrian infrastructure, thereby supporting pedestrian connections within and outside the project.

PL1-B-2. Pedestrian Volumes: Provide ample space for pedestrian flow and circulation, particularly in areas where there is already heavy pedestrian traffic or where the project is expected to add or attract pedestrians to the area.

PL1-B-3. Pedestrian Amenities: Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian oriented open spaces to enliven the area and attract interest and interaction with the site and building should be considered.

PL1-C Outdoor Uses and Activities

PL1-C-1. Selecting Activity Areas: Concentrate activity areas in places with sunny exposure, views across spaces, and in direct line with pedestrian routes.

PL1-C-2. Informal Community Uses: In addition to places for walking and sitting, consider including space for informal community use such as performances, farmer's markets, kiosks and community bulletin boards, cafes, or street vending.

PL1-C-3. Year-Round Activity: Where possible, include features in open spaces for activities beyond daylight hours and throughout the seasons of the year, especially in neighborhood centers where active open space will contribute vibrancy, economic health, and public safety.

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

PL2-A Accessibility

PL2-A-1. Access for All: Provide access for people of all abilities in a manner that is fully integrated into the project design. Design entries and other primary access points such that all visitors can be greeted and welcomed through the front door.

PL2-A-2. Access Challenges: Add features to assist pedestrians in navigating sloped sites, long blocks, or other challenges.

PL2-B Safety and Security

PL2-B-1. Eyes on the Street: Create a safe environment by providing lines of sight and encouraging natural surveillance.

PL2-B-2. Lighting for Safety: Provide lighting at sufficient lumen intensities and scales, including pathway illumination, pedestrian and entry lighting, and/or security lights.

PL2-B-3. Street-Level Transparency: Ensure transparency of street-level uses (for uses such as nonresidential uses or residential lobbies), where appropriate, by keeping views open into spaces behind walls or plantings, at corners, or along narrow passageways.

PL2-C Weather Protection

PL2-C-1. Locations and Coverage: Overhead weather protection is encouraged and should be located at or near uses that generate pedestrian activity such as entries, retail uses, and transit stops.

PL2-C-2. Design Integration: Integrate weather protection, gutters and downspouts into the design of the structure as a whole, and ensure that it also relates well to neighboring buildings in design, coverage, or other features.

PL2-C-3. People-Friendly Spaces: Create an artful and people-friendly space beneath building.

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.

PL3-C Retail Edges

PL3-C-1. Porous Edge: Engage passersby with opportunities to interact visually with the building interior using glazing and transparency. Create multiple entries where possible and make a physical and visual connection between people on the sidewalk and retail activities in the building.

PL3-C-2. Visibility: Maximize visibility into the building interior and merchandise displays. Consider fully operational glazed wall-sized doors that can be completely opened to the street, increased height in lobbies, and/or special lighting for displays.

PL3-C-3. Ancillary Activities: Allow space for activities such as sidewalk vending, seating, and restaurant dining to occur. Consider setting structures back from the street or incorporating space in the project design into which retail uses can extend.

PL4 Active Transportation: Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.

PL4-A Entry Locations and Relationships

PL4-A-1. Serving all Modes of Travel: Provide safe and convenient access points for all modes of travel.

PL4-A-2. Connections to All Modes: Site the primary entry in a location that logically relates to building uses and clearly connects all major points of access.

PL4-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists

PL4-B-1. Early Planning: Consider existing and future bicycle traffic to and through the site early in the process so that access and connections are integrated into the project along with other modes of travel.

PL4-B-2. Bike Facilities: Facilities such as bike racks and storage, bike share stations, shower facilities and lockers for bicyclists should be located to maximize convenience, security, and safety.

PL4-B-3. Bike Connections: Facilitate connections to bicycle trails and infrastructure around and beyond the project.

PL4-C Planning Ahead For Transit

PL4-C-1. Influence on Project Design: Identify how a transit stop (planned or built) adjacent to or near the site may influence project design, provide opportunities for placemaking.

PL4-C-2. On-site Transit Stops: If a transit stop is located onsite, design project-related pedestrian improvements and amenities so that they complement any amenities provided for transit riders.

PL4-C-3. Transit Connections: Where no transit stops are on or adjacent to the site, identify where the nearest transit stops and pedestrian routes are and include design features and connections within the project design as appropriate.

DESIGN CONCEPT

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

DC1-AArrangement of Interior Uses

DC1-A-1. Visibility: Locate uses and services frequently used by the public in visible or prominent areas, such as at entries or along the street front.

DC1-A-2. Gathering Places: Maximize the use of any interior or exterior gathering spaces.

DC1-A-3. Flexibility: Build in flexibility so the building can adapt over time to evolving needs, such as the ability to change residential space to commercial space as needed.

DC1-A-4. Views and Connections: Locate interior uses and activities to take advantage of views and physical connections to exterior spaces and uses.

DC1-BVehicular 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-CParking 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-AMassing

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.

DC2-C Secondary Architectural Features

DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest: Add depth to facades where appropriate by incorporating balconies, canopies, awnings, decks, or other secondary elements into the façade design. Add detailing at the street level in order to create interest for the pedestrian and encourage active street life and window shopping (in retail areas).

DC2-C-2. Dual Purpose Elements: Consider architectural features that can be dual purpose— adding depth, texture, and scale as well as serving other project functions.

DC2-C-3. Fit With Neighboring Buildings: Use design elements to achieve a successful fit between a building and its neighbors.

DC2-D Scale and Texture

DC2-D-1. Human Scale: Incorporate architectural features, elements, and details that are of human scale into the building facades, entries, retaining walls, courtyards, and exterior spaces in a manner that is consistent with the overall architectural concept

DC2-D-2. Texture: Design the character of the building, as expressed in the form, scale, and materials, to strive for a fine-grained scale, or "texture," particularly at the street level and other areas where pedestrians predominate.

DC2-E Form and Function

DC2-E-1. Legibility and Flexibility: Strive for a balance between building use legibility and flexibility. Design buildings such that their primary functions and uses can be readily determined from the exterior, making the building easy to access and understand. At the same time, design flexibility into the building so that it may remain useful over time even as specific programmatic needs evolve.

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-CDesign

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-AExterior Elements and Finishes

DC4-A-1. 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.

DC4-A-2. Climate Appropriateness: Select durable and attractive materials that will age well in Seattle's climate, taking special care to detail corners, edges, and transitions.

DC4-BSignage

DC4-B-1. Scale and Character: Add interest to the streetscape with exterior signs and attachments that are appropriate in scale and character to the project and its environs.

DC4-B-2. Coordination with Project Design: Develop a signage plan within the context of architectural and open space concepts, and coordinate the details with façade design, lighting, and other project features to complement the project as a whole, in addition to the surrounding context.

DC4-CLighting

DC4-C-1. Functions: Use lighting both to increase site safety in all locations used by pedestrians and to highlight architectural or landscape details and features such as entries, signs, canopies, plantings, and art.

DC4-C-2. Avoiding Glare: Design project lighting based upon the uses on and off site, taking care to provide illumination to serve building needs while avoiding off-site night glare and light pollution.

DC4-DTrees, 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.

DC4-E Project Assembly and Lifespan

DC4-E-1. Deconstruction: When possible, design the project so that it may be deconstructed at the end of its useful lifetime, with connections and assembly techniques that will allow reuse of materials.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis summarized above was based on the design review packet dated Monday, January 6, 2020. After considering the site and context, considering public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, the Recommendation phase of the subject design is APPROVED with the following conditions:

1. Work with the Land Use reviewer to select durable and easily maintainable materials for the vehicular tunnel that are consistent with the overall architectural concept. (DC2-B-1, DC2-C-2, DC4-A)
2. Internalize the two recessed waste storage areas on the southern façade. (DC1-C-4)
3. Provide a common amenity area that supports opportunities for social interaction between residents. (PL3-B-4, DC3-B-4)
4. Introduce one more secondary architectural detail that will draw visitors to the pedestrian path on the southern side of the site. (PL2-D, DC1-B-1, DC4-D-2)
5. Use the same hardscape material for the entirety of the pedestrian path, from the sidewalk to all residential entries in the rear building. (PL2-D, DC1-B-1, DC4-D-2)

ANALYSIS & DECISION – DESIGN REVIEW

Director's Analysis

The design review process prescribed in Section 23.41.016.G of the Seattle Municipal Code describing the content of the SDCI Director's administrative design review decision reads as follows:

1. A decision on an application for a permit subject to administrative design review shall be made by the Director.
2. The Director's design review decision shall be made as part of the overall Master Use Permit decision for the project. The Director's decision shall be based on the extent to which the proposed project meets the guideline priorities and in consideration of public comments on the proposed project.

Subject to the preliminary conditions identified during the recommendation phase of review, the design of the proposed project was found by the SDCI Staff to adequately conform to the applicable Design Guidelines.

Staff identified elements of the Design Guidelines which are critical to the project's overall success.

SDCI staff worked with the applicant to update the submitted plans to address the preliminary design review conditions identified during the recommendation phase of review:

1. The applicant has wrapped the wood and fiber cement materials from the street-facing façade into the vehicular tunnel, providing durable materials that are consistent with the architectural concept that satisfy recommended condition #1.

2. The waste storage areas have been modified and relocated away from the pedestrian path, satisfying recommended condition #2.
3. A seating area in the front setback has been added to create opportunities for social interaction between residents, satisfying recommended condition #3.
4. The applicant has added a board-formed concrete wall at the south end of the site that will include address signage, improving wayfinding and satisfying recommended condition #4.
5. The hardscape material for the pedestrian path has been extended across the entire length of the path, satisfying recommended condition #5.

The applicant shall be responsible for ensuring that all construction documents, details, and specifications are shown and constructed consistent with the approved MUP drawings.

The Director of SDCI finds that the proposal is consistent with the City of Seattle Design Review Guidelines.

DECISION – DESIGN REVIEW

The Director CONDITIONALLY APPROVES the proposed design with conditions listed at the end of this document.

II. ANALYSIS – SHORELINE SUBSTANTIAL DEVELOPMENT

23.60A.030 - Criteria for obtaining shoreline substantial development permits, special use authorizations, shoreline conditional use permits and shoreline variance permits.

A. The Director may approve or approve with conditions an application for a development, shoreline modification, or use that requires a shoreline substantial development permit, shoreline conditional use permit, shoreline variance permit, or special use approval if the Director determines the applicant has demonstrated that the development, shoreline modification, or use:

1. Is consistent with the policies and procedures of RCW 90.58.020;

Chapter 90.58 RCW is known as the Shoreline Management Act of 1971. It is the policy of the State to provide for the management of the State's shorelines by planning for and fostering all reasonable and appropriate uses. This policy seeks to protect against adverse effects to the public health, the land and its vegetation and wildlife, and the waters of the state and their aquatic life, while protecting generally public rights of navigation and corollary incidental rights. Permitted uses in the shorelines shall be designed and conducted in a manner to minimize, insofar as practical, any resultant damage to the ecology and environment of the shoreline area and any interference with the public's use of the water. Construction of the project will result in no direct impacts to the nearby Elliott Bay and, by using appropriate Best Management Practices during construction for protection of the aquatic habitat, will not adversely impact the state-wide interest of protecting the resources and ecology of the shoreline. The subject application is consistent with the procedures outlined in RCW 90.58.

2. Is not prohibited in any shoreline environment, underlying zone and overlay district in which it would be located;

The proposed use within the shoreline environment is multifamily residential. This use is permitted in the Urban Residential (UR) Shoreline Environment (SMC 23.60A.540) and the underlying LR2 zone (SMC 23.47A.004).

3. Meets the standards in this Chapter 23.60A and any applicable development standards of the underlying zone or overlay district, except where a variance from a specific development standard has been granted; and

The Shoreline Management Act provides definitions and concepts and gives primary responsibility for initiating and administering the regulatory program of the Act to local governments. The Department of Ecology is to primarily act in a supportive and review capacity, with primary emphasis on ensuring compliance with the policy and provisions of the Act. As a result of this Act, the City of Seattle adopted a local shoreline master program, codified in the Seattle Municipal Code at Chapter 23.60A that also incorporates the provisions of Chapter 173-27, WAC. Title 23 of the Municipal Code is also referred to as the Land Use Code. Development on the shorelines of the state is not to be undertaken unless it is consistent with the policies and provisions of the Act and with the local master program. The Act sets out procedures, such as public notice and appeal requirements, and penalties for violating its provisions which have also been set forth in the Land Use Code.

In evaluating requests for substantial development permits, the Director must determine that a proposed use and subsequent development meets the relevant criteria set forth in the Land Use Code. The Shoreline Goals and Policies, part of the Seattle Comprehensive Plan, and the purpose and location criteria for each shoreline environment must be considered and this project with its upland location was found to comply. The purpose of the UR Environment (SMC 23.60A.220.D.11.) is to provide for single-family residential development and accessory structures, while protecting ecological functions. Multifamily residential development is allowed in this environment where the underlying zone, as of the date of this ordinance, allows multifamily residential development. A proposal must also be consistent with the general development standards of SMC 23.60A.152, the specific standards of the shoreline environment (SMC 23.60A.386) and underlying zoning designation (LR2), which is discussed below.

SMC 23.60A.152 - Development Standards for all Environments

These general standards apply to all uses in the shoreline environments. The standards require that design and construction of all uses be conducted in an environmentally sound manner, consistent with the Shoreline Management Program and with best management practices for the specific use or activity. Compliance with applicable codes and ordinances for construction of the project (e.g., Building Code, Stormwater Code, Grading Code) will reduce or eliminate most potential adverse long-term impacts to the shoreline environment. The applicant will implement Best Management Practices during development to ensure, in part, protection of water quality and potential adverse impacts to the shoreline environment and nearby Elliott Bay during construction.

Standards for UR Environment and the LR2 underlying zone
The subject property is classified as an upland lot and is located within an Urban Residential (UR) Environment, as designated by the Seattle Shoreline Master Program. Pursuant to SMC 23.60A.382, multifamily residential uses are permitted outright on upland lots in the UR Environment. The project has been reviewed by Seattle DCI staff and found to be consistent with all applicable use and development standards such as height and rooftop features. The multifamily residential use is also consistent with all applicable standards in the underlying zone (SMC 23.47A) where this project will be located.

4. If the development, shoreline modification, or use requires a special use approval, shoreline conditional use permit, or shoreline variance permit, the project meets the criteria for the same established in Sections 23.60A.032, 23.60A.034, or 23.60A.036, respectively.

The proposed project does not require special use approval, a shoreline conditional use permit or a shoreline variance permit.

DECISION - SHORELINE SUBSTANTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Shoreline Substantial Development Permit is **GRANTED**.

III. ANALYSIS – ECA VARIANCES

The applicant has requested variances from two requirements of the environmentally critical areas ordinance: ECA Variance to encroach into the steep slope buffer and an ECA Variance for a reduced front setback. Pursuant to the environmentally critical areas ordinance (SMC 25.09) the Director may allow these ECA Variances only when *all* of the facts and conditions stated in the numbered paragraphs below are found to exist:

SMC 25.09.180.E Steep Slope Variance

1. *The Director may reduce the steep slope area buffer and may authorize limited intrusion into the steep slope area and steep slope buffer to the extent allowed in subsection E2 only when the applicant qualifies for a variance by demonstrating that:*

    a. *the lot where the steep slope or steep slope buffer is located was in existence before October 31, 1992; and*

The lot was in existence before October 31, 1992. This criterion is met.

    b. *the proposed development otherwise meets the criteria for granting a variance under Section 25.09.280B, except that reducing the front or rear yard or setbacks will not both mitigate the hardship and maintain the full steep slope area buffer.*

The analysis of the proposal in response to criteria in 25.09.280B follows the analysis of 25.09.180E in this document.

As shown by the topographic survey and site plan, the majority of the property is designated as a steep slope ECA or steep slope buffer. The steep slope and buffer area are located on the east

portion of the site. The strict application of the steep slope standards would require avoidance of both the steep slope area and the steep slope buffer, significantly reducing the ability to develop the site. In addition, an exceptional tree located at the front of the site limits the ability to shift development closer to the street.

The applicant is requesting a reduced front setback to allow development within three feet, six inches of the front property line. Reduction of the required front setback does not result in a feasible building footprint of the type envisioned in the LR2 zoning district outside of the steep slope and steep slope buffers, so it does not fully mitigate the hardship created by the strict application of the steep slope standards, nor does it maintain the full steep slope buffer.

2. *If any buffer reduction or development in the critical area is authorized by a variance under subsection E1, it shall be the minimum to afford relief from the hardship and shall be in the following sequence of priority:*

    a. *reduce the yards and setbacks, to the extent reducing the yards or setbacks is not injurious to safety;*
    b. *reduce the steep slope area buffer;*
    c. *allow an intrusion into not more than thirty percent (30%) of the steep slope area.*

The applicant is proposing a reduced front setback. Due to the exceptional tree in the front setback and the extensive presence of the steep slope area and its buffer, a setback reduction on its own is insufficient for relieving the hardship.

The proposed development consists of five townhouse residences and the eight vehicle parking spaces required by the Alki Parking Overlay District. The proposal is of similar size and scale to many of the developments in the vicinity, including the recently approved project immediately south of the site (6677448-CN).

The applicant proposes a 688 square-foot buffer intrusion and no intrusion into the steep slope area. The proposed development follows the sequence of priority and does not create an intrusion of more than 30% of the steep slope area. The proposal therefore meets this criterion.

3. *The Director may impose additional conditions on the location and other features of the proposed development as necessary to carry out the purpose of this chapter and mitigate the reduction or loss of the yard, setback, or steep slope area or buffer.*

The proposed residence is designed to be minimally intrusive into the buffer and does not encroach into the steep slope area at all. Disturbed areas will be required to be re-vegetated with native vegetation as an ECA code requirement. A non-disturbance area covenant is required by the ECA code.

In addition, to the provisions discussed above, SDCI may grant an ECA variance only when all of the following criteria are met, as set forth in SMC 25.09.280 B, as stated below.

SMC 25.09.280.B. Yard and setback reduction and variance to preserve ECA buffers and riparian corridor management areas.

The Director may approve a yard or setback reduction greater than five feet (5') in order to maintain the full width of the riparian management area, wetland buffer or steep-slope area

buffer through an environmentally critical areas yard or setback reduction variance when the following facts and conditions exist:

1. *The lot has been in existence as a legal building site prior to October 31, 1992.*

The lot was in existence before October 31, 1992. This criterion is met.

2. *Because of the location of the subject property in or abutting an environmentally critical area or areas and the size and extent of any required environmentally critical areas buffer, the strict application of the applicable yard or setback requirements of Title 23 would cause unnecessary hardship; and*

The proposal requests a front setback reduction to preserve the entirety of the steep slope area and reduce the total encroachment into the steep slope buffer. The ability to reduce the front setback is limited due to the retention of an exceptional tree in the front setback. Due to the extensive presence of the steep slope area and its buffer, failure to grant the front setback variance would result in increased encroachment into the steep slope area and its buffer or would result in an undue hardship as development potential is significantly constrained.

3. *The requested variance does not go beyond the minimum to stay out of the full width of the riparian management area or required buffer and to afford relief; and*

SMC 25.09.180 modifies this provision to allow for developmental disturbance within the steep slope ECA and/or its buffer. As the entire site is an ECA, a variance is required to development the site. The applicant is proposing a five-unit townhouse development comparable in size and location to neighboring properties. Therefore, the buffer reduction would allow development of the site which would minimally disturb or alter the character of the existing heavily vegetated property.

4. *The granting of the variance will not be injurious to safety or to the property or improvements in the zone or vicinity in which the property is located; and*

The applicant has provided a geotechnical report (Geotech Consultants, Inc., dated April 2, 2019) which provided findings and preliminary recommendations for future development. The geotechnical reports have been reviewed and were approved on June 9, 2020 by SDCI's geotechnical engineer. SDCI's geotechnical experts have determined that the impacts to soils can be sufficiently mitigated through the Grading Code and Stormwater Code review by the Geotechnical Engineer during the Building Permit phase of review. The applicant will be required to submit geotechnical studies and any other information to determine compliance with those Codes during Building Permit review.

Development will be required to be conducted in accordance with these recommendations before issuance of any permits allowing for disturbance of the site, such disturbance within the steep slope buffer should not be injurious to the property or to neighboring properties. In addition, a drainage plan is required by the ECA Code to minimize disturbance of the steep slope buffer and will be detailed and reviewed during review of the associated building permit. Further, the applicant is proposing to locate the new homes on the most level and most stable portion of the property.

Therefore, granting the variance to minimally intrude into the steep slope buffer will not be injurious to safety, property, or improvements in the zone or vicinity.

5. *The yard or setback reduction that will not result in a development is materially detrimental to the character, design and streetscape of the surrounding neighborhood, considering such factors as height, bulk, scale, yards, pedestrian environment, and amount of vegetation remaining; and*

The applicant is requesting a variance for a reduced front setback of three feet, six inches; a five-foot minimum setback with seven-foot average is the code required setback in the LR2 zoning district. The applicant has proposed to locate the homes closer to the front of the property in order to preserve a larger portion of the ECA steep slope area and its buffer. The exceptional tree in the front setback is being retained and protected.

Further, the proposed building is comparable in height, bulk, and scale to neighboring homes. Allowing the building to be placed closer to the street creates a more continuous and consistent building pattern, as well as, allowing for less disturbance of the site.

Therefore, the proposed development will not result in materially detrimental effects on the character, design, streetscape of the surrounding neighborhood.

6. *The requested variance would be consistent with the spirit and purpose of the environmentally critical policies and regulations.*

The environmentally critical policies and regulations were created to protect ecological functions, prevent erosion and protect the public health, safety and welfare in landslide-prone (including steep slope) areas, and to permit landowners reasonable development and avoid development that causes injury to persons, property, public resources or the environment.

The applicant proposes to construct five-unit townhouse development on a site heavily covered by steep slopes and steep slope buffers. Variance relief is necessary to allow the type of development envisioned in the LR2 zoning district. The proposal would be consistent with the spirit and purpose of the environmentally critical policies and regulations.

C. When an environmentally critical areas variance is authorized, the Director may attach conditions regarding the location, character and other features of a proposed development to carry out the spirit and purpose of this chapter.

A non-disturbance covenant shall be required. In addition, a revegetation plan is required to demonstrate how the disturbed areas will be in compliance with SMC 25.09.180, vegetation and replanting.

A steep slope revegetation plan must be submitted prior to MUP issuance. Removal of trees or vegetation in a steep slope area and its buffer must show replanting with native vegetation. The landscape plan is an ECA code requirement and must be incorporated into the associated building permit in order for the project to be approved. (All work in the right-of-way requires SDOT approval.)

DECISION –ECA VARIANCES

The ECA Variances are **CONDITIONALLY GRANTED**.

CONDITIONS – DESIGN REVIEW

For the Life of the Project

1. The building and landscape design shall be substantially consistent with the materials represented at the Recommendation meeting and in the materials submitted after the Recommendation meeting, before the MUP issuance. Any change to the proposed design, including materials or colors, shall require prior approval by the Land Use Planner (Wayne Farrens, wayne.farrens@seattle.gov).

CONDITIONS – SHORELINE SUBSTANTIAL DEVELOPMENT

None.

CONDITIONS – ECA VARIANCE

Prior to MUP Issuance

2. Provide an ECA Covenant recorded with King County Office of Records and Elections meeting the requirements of SMC 23.09.335.B.2.
3. A landscape plan indicating revegetation of the disturbed steep slope area and buffer shall be provided as required by SMC 25.09.320.

During Construction

4. All grading, demolition, and other construction related earthwork must follow the recommendation contained in the geotechnical reports prepared by Geotech Consultants, Inc., or that may be contained in other studies that may be required as supplemental geotechnical reports by SDCI to issuance of construction permits.

Wayne Farrens, Land Use Planner
Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections

Date: August 20, 2020

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ISSUANCE OF YOUR MASTER USE PERMIT

Master Use Permit Expiration and Issuance

The appealable land use decision on your Master Use Permit (MUP) application has now been published. At the conclusion of the appeal period, your permit will be considered "approved for issuance". (If your decision is appealed, your permit will be considered "approved for issuance" on the fourth day following the City Hearing Examiner's decision.) Projects requiring a Council land use action shall be considered "approved for issuance" following the Council's decision.

The "approved for issuance" date marks the beginning of the **three year life** of the MUP approval, whether or not there are outstanding corrections to be made or pre-issuance conditions to be met. The permit must be issued by SDCI within that three years or it will expire and be cancelled (SMC 23-76-028). (Projects with a shoreline component have a **two year life**. Additional information regarding the effective date of shoreline permits may be found at 23.60.074.)

All outstanding corrections must be made, any pre-issuance conditions met and all outstanding fees paid before the permit is issued. You will be notified when your permit has issued.

Questions regarding the issuance and expiration of your permit may be addressed to the Public Resource Center at prc@seattle.gov or to our message line at 206-684-8467.