



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

Project Number: 3029952-LU
Applicant Name: Tim Carter, Cone Architecture
Address of Proposal: 3084 SW Avalon Way

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use application to allow a 7-story apartment building with 35 small efficiency dwelling units. No parking proposed. Existing buildings to be demolished.

The following approvals are required:

Administrative Design Review with Departures (Seattle Municipal Code 23.41)*
Departures are listed near the end of the Design Review Analysis in this document

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: MR-60 (Midrise w/60 foot height limit)

Nearby Zones:
(North) MR-60
(South) MR-60
(East) MR-60
(West) SF5000

Lot Area: 5,039 sf



Current Development:
One single-family structure

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The immediate blocks in the zone are primarily multifamily residential, with a bit of single family and some commercial at the north and southwest ends of Avalon Way. A vibrant commercial area is located a couple of blocks west of SW Avalon Way, where there is a Trader Joe’s, several restaurants and shops, a YMCA, and frequent buses connecting throughout the area. A new Link Light Rail Station located on Avalon Way is right near the proposed site, which has an expected service start year of 2030.

Access:
Existing vehicular access is via the alley to the west.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

None

Public Comment:

The public comment period ended on September 10th, 2018. In addition to the comment(s) received through the Design Review process, other comments were received that are outside the scope of this review per SMC 23.41.

I. ANALYSIS – DESIGN REVIEW

ADMINISTRATIVE EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE May 29, 2018

PUBLIC COMMENT

SDCI received the following public comments:

- Concerned about the height of this project; that it not exceed the 60 foot maximum
- Would like to see the project’s impact on the adjacent single-family zone be taken into account
- Concerned about the lack of parking

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 provided the following siting and design guidance.

ADMINISTRATIVE EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE

1. **Massing Options.** SDCI Staff generally supports the massing shown in Option Three, in particular: the simplicity of its composition (DC2-A, DC2-B) and the (implied) high quality cladding materials (DC4-A-1, DC2-B-1).
2. **Height Bulk and Scale** Staff appreciates the simplicity of this project’s massing and recognizes that the height of the project is code-compliant, but has concerns regarding the alley (west) edge. Directly across this alley the zoning changes from Midrise to single-family. Guideline CS2-D-3 speaks directly to this condition.

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.*

- a. Staff asks that an appropriate scale-mitigating strategy be developed for this edge. The most obvious would be to have the upper two floors step back significantly on the alley edge, but other solutions are possible. (CS2-D-3)
3. **Design Concept.** Staff generally supports the proposed concept; a simple composition of program-driven massing choices, clad in high quality materials and highly-glazed on the street-facing elevation. (DC2-B, CS2-C-1, CS2-A-2)
 - a. As to the setback departures, the language in SMC 23.45.518 (setbacks in MR zones) is clearly intended to create a ‘step’ in massing at 42 feet. This proposal would circumvent that ‘ask’ in favor of a (vertically) unmodulated plane from ground to top.
 - b. Staff is possibly open to this approach, but its success (and their support) would be dependent on a sophisticated composition of high-quality materials, akin to the precedents provided on p. 16-17. (DC4-A, DC2-B)
4. **Exterior Elements and Finishes.** As noted above, the success of this project hinges on the use of high-quality materials and details. To that end, please include in the permit application drawings:
 - a. Clear identification and specification of all exterior materials.
 - b. Seminal details for siding, windows, railings, and transitions. (DC4-A)
5. **Façade Composition:** Staff supports the simplicity of the north elevation but questions the co-planar condition of the stair/penthouse and the units to the west.
 - a. Please revise to eliminate this condition.
 - b. One possible solution would be to step the stair mass proud of the wall to the west. This would push that piece further into the setback, a departure that staff could support.
6. **Entry Area.** Staff supports the location of the principal entry and the heavily glazed and graciously-scaled lobby. Please provide complete details for this area that describe the experience of arrival for residents and guests, whether on foot or cycle. (PL3-A-1, PL3-A-2, PL3-A-4)
 - a. Staff was encouraged to see bicycle parking at EDG and asks that the applicant consider the unique access/egress and storage needs of cyclists to ensure that this feature is truly usable. (PL4-B-1, PL4-B-2)

FIRST RECOMMENDATION January 2, 2019

PUBLIC COMMENT

SDCI received the following public comments:

- Concerned about the height of this project; that it not exceed the 60 foot maximum.
- Concerned about the lack of parking.
- Concerned that the height, bulk, and scale of the project is too large for the street.
- Concerned that the project could destabilize the sloping grade it will be built on.

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 Seattle Design Guidelines 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/>

SDCI PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS & CONDITIONS

SDCI visited the site, considered the analysis of the site and context by the proponents, and considered public comment. SDCI design recommendations are summarized below.

1. Height Bulk and Scale

- a. Staff appreciates the upper-level setback provided at the alley edge where the zoning designation changes from Midrise to single-family but the scale and articulation of this solution is not yet adequate to address this unusually drastic zone transition. (CS2-D-3)
- b. Staff suggests three changes that could help this design meet the criteria of the Design Guidelines on Zone Transitions: (CS2-D-3)
 - i. Increase the upper-level setback distance to a minimum of four (4) feet. Staff recognize the challenge this poses to the viability of the upper level units and will support a rear setback departure for the additional two feet required to make that offset.
 - ii. Staff recognize the compositional value of the ‘eyebrow’ sunshade above the 7th floor windows but agree that it is working at cross-purposes with the intent to mitigate the scale of the project and ask that consideration be given to removing it from the design.
 - iii. The development of an articulated cap or coping at the projecting base element to help it connect to the scale of the adjacent single-family zone.

2. Design Concept

- a. Staff are concerned about the significant changes made to the street-facing elevation since the EDG review, agreeing that the simplicity and striking composition of this facade had been significantly diminished. Staff supports the idea of the bay window as a primary organizing element, but not the current composition of projecting and receding planes, possibly due to the ambition of this scheme outstripping the capacity of this narrow site. (DC2, PL3, CS3)
- b. After an extensive consideration of the merits of the current design (relative to the Design Guidelines and the character sketch shown at EDG) staff agrees that a combination of minor adjustments could yield a result that brought back the elegant simplicity so strongly supported at the previous EDG review. (DC2, PL3, CS3)
- c. Staff agrees that many solutions were possible and encourages the applicant to explore a wide range of options that would tend to simplify and clarify the organization of this facade. Staff identifies the following as a few (of the many) possibilities: (DC2, PL3, CS3)
 - i. A reduction in the number of ideas/materials in the street-facing facade
 - ii. The reorientation of the siding grain to run vertically as in the EDG rendering

- iii. An increase in the glazing percentage at the projecting bay at northeast units (likely in combination with a simplification of the window composition/assembly in the units at the southeast)
- iv. The leveraging of the depth (from face-of-framing) of the proposed metal siding at material transitions, windows, and doors
- v. A relocation of the 5 floors of bay window to begin at the second floor and end at the sixth (eliminating the difficult current condition below the bay and mitigating project height at the street edge)

3. Exterior Elements and Finishes. Staff supports many of the materials specified for this project with the following notes:

- a. Staff are concerned that the proposed metal siding be clearly commercial in character (versus what may be a lighter-duty product shown on p. 13) and suggest either a change to a higher-quality concealed-fastener product (such as the TW-12) or the specification of 22-gauge minimum material in the current profile. (DC4-A)
- b. If the exterior cladding materials include 5/16" fiber-cement, the construction set will need to include all assembly details, including walls, corners, windows, panel joints, and transitions and include all critical dimensions and material specifications (furring type and spacing, reveal widths, flashing gauge and finish, etc.). (DC4-A)

4. Entry Area

- a. Staff supports the location of the principal entry and the development of a shared activated space at the street-edge but have concerns about the programming and articulation of this space:
 - i. At EDG this was shown as a single multi-use space which would tend to encourage its use by residents and create the sort of street-level interaction called for in PL-3.
 - ii. Staff encourage the revision of this area to recreate the clear indoor-outdoor connection and potential for active use demonstrated in the EDG drawings. (PL3-A-1, PL3-A-2, PL3-A-4)

FINAL RECOMMENDATION February 13, 2019

PUBLIC COMMENT

SDCI received the following public comments:

- Concerned about the height of this project; that it not exceed the 60 foot maximum.
- Concerned about the lack of parking.
- Concerned that the height, bulk, and scale of the project is too large for the street.
- Concerned that the project could destabilize the sloping grade it will be built on.

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 Seattle Design Guidelines 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/>

SDCI PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS & CONDITIONS

SDCI visited the site, considered the analysis of the site and context by the proponents, and considered public comment. SDCI design recommendations are summarized below.

1. Height Bulk and Scale

- a. Staff appreciates the additional upper-level setback provided at the alley edge where the zoning designation changes from Midrise to single-family and supports the simplification of this elevation. (CS2-D-3)

2. Design Concept

- a. Staff supports the changes to the street-facing elevation in response to guidance and finds the resulting composition to have restored the simplicity and elegance of the schematic sketches provided at EDG. (PL3, CS3)
 - i. Staff supports the reduction in the number of ideas and materials in the street-facing façade, and the reorientation of the siding grain to run vertically as both support the architectural concept. (DC2)
 - ii. Staff also supports the relocation of the 5 floors of bay window to begin at the second floor and end at the sixth as this mitigates project height at the street edge. (CS2-D)

3. Exterior Elements and Finishes.

- a. Staff supports the materials specified for this project as durable, attractive and maintainable. (DC4-A)
- b. Staff note: If the exterior cladding materials include 5/16" fiber-cement, the construction permit plan set will need to include all assembly details, including walls, corners, windows, panel joints, and transitions and include all critical dimensions and material specifications (furring type and spacing, reveal widths, flashing gauge and finish, etc.). (DC4-A)

4. Entry Area

- a. Staff supports the location of the principal entry and the development of a shared activated space at the street-edge. (PL3-A-1, PL3-A-2, PL3-A-4)
- b. Staff suggests that the railings at the street-edge be comprised of materials that are clearly different from those designed for the project under construction to the north. A condition is not recommended for this change, but the applicant is encouraged to consider this aspect of the design. (PL3-A)

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

SDCI Staff's preliminary recommendation on the requested departure(s) are based on the departures' 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).

At the time of the FINAL RECOMMENDATION review, the following departures were requested:

1. **Setbacks and Separations (SMC 23.45.518.B):** The Code requires a 7'-0" avg./ 5'-0" min. setback from interior lot lines for portions of the structure below 42-feet. The applicant proposes a reduction of this setback to 7'-11" avg./ 3'-6" min at the north property line.

SDCI staff supports the requested departure as it eliminates a co-planar condition between the stair tower and adjacent wall and helps clarify the massing concept, which better meets the intent of Design Guideline **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)**.

2. **Setbacks and Separations (SMC 23.45.518.B)**: The Code requires a 10'-0" avg./ 7'-0" min. setback from interior lot line lot lines for portions of the structure above 42-feet. The applicant proposes a reduction of this setback to 7'-11" avg./ 3'-6" min. at the north property line.

SDCI staff supports the requested departure as it simplifies the massing and results in an attractive and well-proportioned façade, which better meets the intent of Design Guideline **DC2-B (Architectural and Facade Composition)**.

3. **Setbacks and Separations (SMC 23.45.518.B)**: The Code requires a 10'-0" avg./ 7'-0" min. setback from interior lot line lot lines for portions of the structure above 42-feet. The applicant proposes a reduction of this setback to 7'-6" avg./ 5'-9" min. at the south property line.

SDCI staff supports the requested departure as it simplifies the massing and results in an attractive and well-proportioned façade, which better meets the intent of Design Guideline **DC2-B (Architectural and Facade Composition)**.

4. **Setbacks and Separations (SMC 23.45.518.B)**: The Code requires a 7'-0" avg./ 5'-0" min. setback from street lot lines. The applicant proposes a reduction of this setback to 6'-8" avg./ 5'-7" min. at the street-facing east property line.

SDCI staff supports the requested departure as it allows the bay enfronting the street to occur one story lower, which has a positive scale-diminishing effect on the massing, and better meets the intent of Design Guideline **CS2-D-4 (Massing Choices)**.

5. **Setbacks and Separations (SMC 23.45.518)**: The Code requires a 10'-0" setback from a rear lot line abutting an alley. The applicant proposes a reduction of this setback to 8'-1" from the third through fifth floors.

SDCI staff supports the requested departure as it allows a larger upper-level setback, which has a positive scale-diminishing effect at this point of zone transition, and better meets the intent of Design Guideline **CS2-D-3 (Zone Transitions)**.

ANALYSIS & DECISION – DESIGN REVIEW

Director's Analysis

The design review process prescribed in Section 23.41.016.D 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 administrative design review shall be made by the Director as part of the overall Master Use Permit decision for the project.

2. The Director's decision shall be based on the extent to which the proposed project meets applicable design guidelines and in consideration of public comments on the proposed project.
3. Projects subject to administrative design review must meet all codes and regulatory requirements applicable to the subject site, except as provided for in Section 23.41.012.

The design of the proposed project was found by the SDCI Staff to adequately conform to the applicable Design Guidelines.

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.

DIRECTOR'S DECISION

The Director **CONDITIONALLY APPROVES** the proposed design and the requested departures.

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 (Joe Hurley, joseph.hurley@seattle.gov, 206/684-8278).

Joseph Hurley, Land Use Planner
Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections

Date: July 22, 2019

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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.