

City of Seattle

Response to Guidelines: MUP Application for Design Review

1. Please describe the proposal in detail, including types of uses; size of structure(s), location of structure(s), amount, location and access to parking; special design treatment of any particular physical site features (e.g., vegetation, watercourses, slopes), etc.

RESPONSE:

- The proposed structure is a mixed-use apartment structure containing 49 Small Efficiency Dwelling Units (SEDU's) plus 1 Live/Work unit for a total of 50 units. The total gross area of the structure is 22,621 Sq. Ft. with 21,144 Sq. Ft. of that area attributing to the allowed Floor Area Ratio (FAR). Please note that the project is roughly 3,700 Sq. Ft. below allowable FAR.
 - The site is a commercially zoned site with 0' setbacks at all property lines. By code, the proposed building can occupy the entire site. Instead, the proposal includes roughly 3' to 5' setbacks at both side yards, a 6' setback in the alley for the full height of the structure other than small projecting balconies that add interest to the west elevation, and a 4'-6" setback along Eastlake Ave E plus a large, recessed entry court.
 - The project site is located within a mapped Frequent Transit Service Area. Parking is not required or proposed for the project.
 - In general, the project is being designed as a contemporary solution. Layout of the structure and exterior materials are more from a contemporary palette and is not trying to appear historic or relate specifically to the hodgepodge of architectural examples in the immediate area. Overall materials include pre-finished architectural panels, painted cementitious panels, white and black vinyl windows, aluminum storefront, metal design copings, and other miscellaneous painted metal accent elements.
2. Please describe in narrative text and on plans any specific requests for development standard departures, including specific rationale(s) and a quantitative comparison to a code-complying scheme. Include in the MUP plan set initial design response drawings with at least four (4) colored and shadowed elevation drawings and site/landscape plan.

RESPONSE:

- The proposed project does not include any departure requests.
 - Per city standards, the submitted MUP set includes colored and shadowed exterior elevations as well as a colored landscape plan.
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3. Please describe how the proposed design responds to the Early Design Guidance.

RESPONSE:

- **Massing Options and Exceptional Tree:** City staff has commented on the proposed minimal excavation of vertical development of the site at the eastern portion of the site and near the neighboring exceptional tree. As noted in the EDG book the exceptional tree is roughly 2' higher in grade than the existing and future patio on the subject site. The existing patio extends all the way to the property line and a concrete retaining wall also exists on the property line. Under this condition, we find it very unlikely that the roots of the exceptional tree extend onto our property. Probably the best approach is to investigate the root condition on our site during demolition; if roots do extend onto our site, care will need to be taken to minimize cutting of the larger roots.

City staff has also commented on the impact to the canopy. As noted, our building is setback from the property line by roughly 4' which should provide good light and air around the canopy of the tree. In addition, we are providing an open entry court that will provide more 'light and air'; this open entry court area is roughly 12' clear to the underside of the soffit at the entry court. This open area should provide more than adequate space for the tree to survive.

- **Façade Design and Material Treatment:** A great deal of design effort has been spent looking at the exterior design of the building, locations of windows, and materiality. City staff has commented on the inspirational images included in the EDG and noted that EDG massing images did not show the same level of playfulness. The design team has strived to create the level of variety shown in the inspirational images, but we have run across a restricting factor related to the small general size of the SEDU units; each unit should have at least one nice large window similar all the other units, window openings need to be above the fall protection height, and windows to be operable for residents with disabilities. This combination of factors has led us in a direction where windows are more similar, and they tend to stack just as the units themselves. Also note that on the north and south elevations we are restricted with how much glazing we can have by building code based on the distance from the property line. The west of east elevations have more freedom of percentage of opening and in those two cases we have increased the amount of glazing and designed the layout to create a nice alignment of window openings.

City staff has commented in general on the window placement, window sizes, and materiality shown in the EDG packet. As part of the design teams internal process, we have spent time refining the overall design of the building. We believe that the design has evolved since the EDG packet work to show a more refined logical placement and sizing of windows and a nice simple approach to the exterior materials. Exterior materials currently include pre-finished architectural panels, painted cementitious panels, white and black vinyl windows, aluminum storefront, metal design copings, and other miscellaneous painted metal accent elements. As noted by city staff, strong accent colors are not included in the current design.

- **Site Planning, Ground Floor and Street Edges:** City staff has suggested that the open entry court is intended to provide light and air to the neighboring exceptional tree, but the space is too deep and not tall enough to truly support the health of the neighbor's tree. The design team strongly disagrees. We are working with structural limitations related to the stacking of wood framed bearing walls. In addition, the site is only 50' wide with approximately 8' of that width lost to side yard voluntary setbacks; this width combined with the need to stack structural bearing walls limits us to the proposed Live/Work width, street facing lobby exposure and the open courtyard which we see as a great benefit to the overall design and the health of a neighboring tree. Moving these elements only weakens the visibility of the lobby to the street facing façade and reduces the amount of light and air available to the neighbor's tree. City staff has suggested that transparent walls be provided near the exceptional tree so that residents can see the tree from indoors. Please understand that locating walls with windows close to the property line is restricted by SBC 705.8 and I705.8; we are currently proposing alignment with I705.8 which allows us to use the south walls of the lobby as if they were on the property line; moving the

walls to the property line will result in those walls having very limited openings which would be harmful to the overall design, would reduce the amount of light and air around the tree, and any windows would not be large enough to actually enjoy the neighboring tree.

City staff has voiced concern that the main residential entry is not visible or discernable from the Live/Work entry. The design team feels that these two spaces are completely different in nature which is not adequately represented in massing and elevation images. The residential entry court is open air, furnished, well lit, and includes signage that will clearly denote building entry. The Live/Work space will be controlled by the tenant of that space which means signage will be limited or not included at all, interior and exterior lighting will be tenant controlled, visibility into the space will also be tenant controlled.

City staff commented on the opportunity for planting areas in the alley as well as balancing the amount of landscaping at the Live/Work unit to both help active the public realm and provide a spill out space. The design team has responded by providing a bio-planter in the alley which is located at the downhill portion of the site to help collect rainwater off the roof. The bio-planter will be a raised concrete structure which will help protect the bio-planter and the structure as well as provide a sustainable visible landscape element in the alley. The Live/Work space has been revised to include a full width stoop which could easily be used by the tenant of that space as a small spill out space and seating opportunity.

City staff commented on the relationship of the north facing units as related to the existing building to the north. The design team is concerned too which is why we've voluntarily set our building back from the property line by approximately 5' to allow us to have windows at all, and provide a small, landscaped area with shade tolerant plant species. The property to the north may be developed at some time. In the worst-case scenario, they could build a blank wall on their property line. At minimum we will end up with a 5' gap view from those units which is an acceptable condition in an urban environment regardless of landscape survival. The better case scenario is that the future development to the north uses our windows as a catalyst for their design; they set back their building 5' and locate windows in their walls too; and any landscape material in that space has a better chance of survival.

- **Materials:** General material quality and nature were included in the EDG packet, but not specifically applied to the building since we were in the EDG massing phase. Since that time, we have made preliminary material selections and applied them to our building facades as represented in the submitted MUP set.

Proposed materials include:

- Contemporary use of materials that are common in the market and construction industry.
- Simulated highly durable wood siding.
- Painted cementitious exterior panels.
- Black and white vinyl windows.
- Painted metal accents including balconies and railings.
- Exposed architecturally finished concrete.
- Region and market appropriate landscaping.

END OF DOCUMENT.