



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

D.M. Sugimura, Director

**DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES
OF
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD QUEEN ANNE MAGNOLIA
1st EDG Meeting - November 2, 2005
2nd EDG Meeting - January 18th, 2006**

Project Number: 3003599 (formerly 2501890)

Address: 500 Fifth Avenue

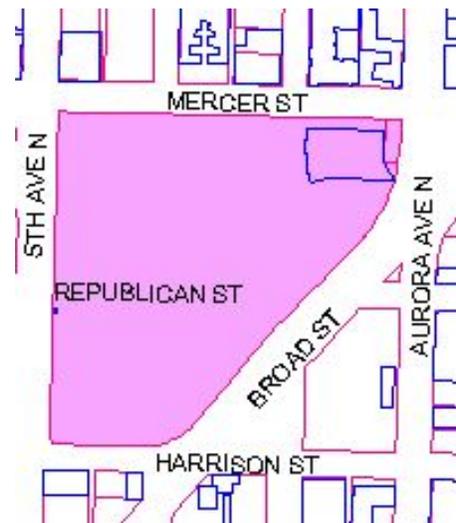
Applicant: Steve McConnell of NBBJ and Lindy Gaylord of Seneca Group,
for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Board members present: Kathryn Armstrong, Chair (11/2, 1/18)
Patrick Doherty (11/2, 1/18)
Christopher Kirk (11/2)
Matt Roewe (11/2, 1/18)
Bill Vandeventer (11/2, 1/18)

DPD Planners present: Molly Hurley
Vince Lyons

Background Information:

The subject site is located east of the Seattle Center, across Fifth Ave. N. It is bounded by 5th Ave. N. on the on the west, Mercer St. on the north, Aurora Ave. N and Broad St. on the east and southeast, and Harrison St. on the south. The site includes the vacated rights-of-way for Republican St., Taylor Ave. N., and Sixth Ave. N. The property is large, more than eight acres in size, and is zoned Neighborhood Commercial 3 (NC3) with a maximum height of eighty-five (85) feet. It is also located within the Uptown Urban Center as designated by the City's Comprehensive Plan. Urban Centers are areas that are intended to be high density employment and residential areas that are well served by transit.



The site is currently occupied by a surface parking lot. DPD published Master Use Permit (MUP) No. 2500762 to establish use for future construction of a new, 1,050-vehicle parking garage for the Seattle Center in September 2005. The garage will be located immediately southwest of the subject property, at the corner of Harrison Street and Fifth Avenue North, and is intended to replace the surface parking.

The applicant is planning to redevelop the site into the campus headquarters for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, with approximately 900,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area primarily in office use. The application is a Major Phased Development per Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 23.47.007. A Major Phased Development (MPD) is defined as:

“ . . .a nonresidential, multiple building project which, by the nature of its size or function, is complex enough to require construction phasing over an extended period of time, excluding Major Institutions.” (SMC 23.84.025.“M”)

Major Phased Developments (MPDs) require sites of at least five acres, must be for functionally interrelated campuses with more than one building and with a minimum of at least 200,000 square feet of gross floor area, and must be consistent with the general character of development anticipated by the Land Use Code at the time of application. The first phase of a MPD must consist of at least 100,000 square feet, and permits for this phase are subject to the general provisions for expiration and renewal of permits found at SMC Chapter 23.76. Permits for subsequent phases of the MPD may be extended up to fifteen years from date of issuance.

The proposed development is also the subject of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which is currently under review per Seattle’s SEPA Ordinance.

The vicinity is characterized by the Seattle Center to the west, and low-rise commercial buildings to the east and south. The property north of the site at the northeast corner of Mercer Street and 5th Avenue North is currently under development for a mixed use commercial and residential project. The Seattle Center, like the subject site, is zoned NC3-85’. North of Mercer St, the zoning changes to NC3-40’. To the east and south, the zoning is Seattle Mixed (SM) with sixty-five and eight-five foot height limits, respectively.

First Early Design Guidance Meeting (November 5, 2005) - Summary

Architect’s Presentation - 1st EDG

Steve McConnell of NBBJ Architects made the substantive presentation at this meeting which included an historical overview of the site and contextual analysis of the site. (Note: Please see Packet No. 1 of the Early Design Guidance Packet submitted for this project for a more detailed discussion of the site’s historical and physical context. EDG Packet Nos. 1 and 2, and the complete report of the 1st EDGA meeting are available in the MUP file at DPD.)

Development Objectives

The project proponents' objective is to develop a multi-phase contiguous office campus of approximately 900,000 square feet for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. They seek to "engage the fabric of the City" and complement the urban environment in which it is located. The campus will incorporate interior and exterior work spaces and sustainable building practices. Security is an important consideration for their clients. The Seattle Center parking garage should act as a 'portal' to the site.

Defining Design Principals

Five design elements were identified: Edge definition; Employee/Auto Circulation; "Connective Tissue"; Green Open Space; and Sense of Place.

These five elements are further discussed on page 5.1 of EDG Packet No. 2, and were collectively described as "the walkways, linkages, everything but the buildings." These are the elements that define a campus and how the buildings are connected. The campus must have its own identity, and reach out to the community rather than being exclusive or isolated. Usable open spaces are needed for meetings and reflection, and to create a sense of serenity. The campus must create a sense of welcome, including a "portal" to be proposed at Republican Street.

Design Alternatives

All of the design alternatives include the concept that the campus may have a multitude of uses over a potential 100-year lifespan (which, together with the scale of the surrounding buildings, was a consideration in selecting a scale for the floor plates). All schemes also include the concept of a security perimeter. Republican Street is proposed as the prime entry for the campus, with additional access points proposed along Harrison St. (to the garage) and possibly along Mercer St. The Seattle Center across Fifth Avenue provides a major public open space. A smaller-scale public space will be created at the corner of Fifth and Republican Street with the development of the Seattle Center Garage. A proposed Republican Street entry will create an additional public open space opportunity.

Schemes A and B include all of the features described above, with Scheme A having approximately 100,000 sq. ft. more floor area than Scheme B. As a result, open spaces (public and private) are slightly expanded in Scheme B (as compared with A). The potential for a view corridor from Fifth Avenue down Republican Street becomes evident in both these schemes.

Scheme C incorporates the features of A and B, but shows smaller floor plates of about 40,000 sq. ft., and an overall smaller building scale. This design concept proposes to maintain a consistency of scale with the residential structures on Lower QA, by employing 60 foot structure or bay widths. Green spaces are further developed and consolidated. Streetscape plantings are shown along Fifth, Mercer, Aurora and Broad Streets, including a 70-foot landscaped setback along Mercer Street and a heavily landscaped edge along Broad Street. There will be no surface parking. The Republican Street view corridor extends through the site. A large 'Central Space'

becomes the focal point of the campus, and an asterisk notes a “sense of arrival” as a key feature which occurs along Republican just west of the Central Space along the Republican Street view corridor.

Scheme D includes all of the elements of Scheme C, but reflects potential changes in the street grid which may occur in the next several years. These changes include the lowering of Aurora Avenue North, the re-opening of Sixth Ave. N., and the elimination of Broad Street adjacent to the site.

The applicants are requesting no departures from the Land Use Code.

Board Clarifying Comments - 1st EDG

The Board asked clarifying questions and provided comments on the scale of the site, the need for security, the surrounding streetscape, parking location, the proposed setbacks and the potential changes to the street grid.

It was determined that all streets have been vacated within the site and that the exterior dimensions of the site are: ~1200’ on Mercer; ~600’ on 5th; ~400’ jog at north of new garage. The need for security was addressed by the Gates Foundation representative, who acknowledged that they don’t want to create a “fortress,” but emphasized that security is of highest priority for the client. Board members underscored the need for public spaces, particularly at the edges and including a potential public court at Republican.

The Board indicated they would like to see retail uses extended along Fifth Ave. all the way to Mercer Street. The Board also stated that all parking should be underground, and that there should be wide setbacks on the site edges, particularly along Mercer side. The potential changes to the street grid were further discussed (although these changes are beyond the direct control of the applicant.) Phasing of the project would accommodate the potential changes to the street grid.

Public Comments - 1st EDG

Several members of the public attended the meeting. A summary of their comments follows:

- Enliven 5th Avenue and provide wide setbacks on Mercer side. Maintain transparency all along the 5th Avenue edge.
- Re-establish 6th Avenue (now just a tenuous connection with 5th Avenue) to take to pressure off of 5th Avenue – the community would support a skybridge over a restored 6th Ave public ROW.
- The campus should be part of the community with no fortress perimeter. Modulate the exterior edges. The designers need to creatively develop the security perimeter (for example by using low commercial structures at the edges.)
- The design of the roofs needs attention in light of their visibility from many surrounding areas, particularly from south slopes of QA and taller buildings in the area.

- Any public open space at the perimeter should “touch” any proposed major interior private open space. The public open space element on Republican should push further east.

Board Deliberation – 1st EDG

The Board expressed general enthusiasm for the project, in particular in response to the Gates Foundation’s decision to locate their headquarters in “the heart of the City.” They noted that with this choice comes responsibility to “reach out and engage the community.” The Board’s deliberation focused on many interrelated aspects of this concept, which are described below.

Grid Changes - The Major Phased Development Plan should be flexible enough to respond to potential future changes including the WSDOT vision to reestablish the grid (discussed above) and the Potlatch Trail (which would align with Broad Street and abut the site along Fifth Ave.)

The grid of the site design should reflect the alignment of the surrounding street grids, particularly to the north, where these alignments should be either resolved with an overt terminus or should have open penetrations running significantly through the campus

Security - The Board asked for further clarification regarding the security objective for this site and cautioned that security as a dominant program parameter can lead to poor design outcomes. Given the priority placed on security by the client, the Board urges the design team to be creative in their response. Visual access should be provided even where physical access is not.

Public Access - The design should create ways to provide for public access into and across the very large site, for the public as well as for Foundation staff. Fifth and Mercer should be a focus point for the public and guests and should be designed as a large, clear opening into the whole site. The Republican Street stub proposal will need careful attention to meld public/welcoming/entry functions and create a truly interesting place. Republican Street should be considered as actual access through the site, not just a view corridor.

Perimeter Treatment - The design should blur the site edges with a combination of urban fronts and open edges. Sidewalks need to be widened on the Mercer edge to reflect what is going on in the immediate neighborhood. There needs to be an ample pedestrian corridor created from the new Seattle Center parking garage to the north edge of the site at Mercer.

Human Scale - The Board likes the idea of the proposed 60’ to 65’ modules for building facades discussed by the architect to achieve a more human scale (as reflected in the platting and structure widths in the neighborhood to the north of the site.) The very long (1,200 feet +/-) property line is about four city blocks in length and needs to be broken down in scale to reflect and be knitted into the surrounding built-form fabric. The Board members unanimously agreed and encouraged the team to design structures that reflected the super-eclectic nature of the surrounding area

Bulk and Massing - The designers should explore variable heights for the different potential center and edge structures, and explore vertical icons (such as flagpoles) to create an interesting and varied roof line pattern. These studies should show views looking down on the roofscape

from various vantage points around the campus. Physical three-dimensional massing models are needed to illustrate the overall massing scheme for the campus.

Landscaping - The Board would like to see more landscape concept analysis and more concept details of landscaping alternative elements.

Preferred Scheme - The Board prefers Scheme D if Aurora is under-grounded, and would support Scheme C if the proposed grid changes do not occur.

Additional Information Requested

The Board wants to see:

- 3-D studies with graphic examples of design concepts that the design team is envisioning.
- Conceptual landscape analysis and details of alternatives and elements that provide opportunities for entry into both the site and the buildings.
- More detailed programming information and uses revealed at the next meeting (i.e., location of employee cafeterias and work-out spaces, auditoriums, public reception areas).

Priority Guidelines – 1st EDG

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 siting and design guidance described below and identified by letter and number those siting and design guidelines found in the City of Seattle’s “*Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings*” of highest priority to this project. The design team also identified several Design Review Guidelines as high priorities for the project. The Board appreciates the effort by the applicant to use the common language of the DR Guidelines, but feels that *in addition* to those guidelines identified by the applicant, city staff needs to add in other priority guidelines to reflect the Board’s deliberations (highlighted in bold, below.)

A. Site Planning

A-4 Human Activity – New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.

A-7 Maximize open space opportunities.

A-8 Minimize parking and auto impacts on pedestrians and adjacent property.

A-9 Minimize parking in street front.

B. Height Bulk Scale

B-1 Provide sensitive transition to less intensive zone.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

C-2 Unified architectural concept.

C-3 Human Scale - The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve a good human scale.

C-4 Use durable, attractive well detailed materials

- C-5 Minimize visual impacts of parking structures
- D. Pedestrian Environment
- D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances** - Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.
- D-2 Blank Walls** - Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.
- D-4 Minimize visual and physical intrusion of parking lots on pedestrian areas.
- D-5 Minimize visual impact of parking structures.
- D-6 Screen dumpsters, utility and service areas.
- D-7 Consider personal safety.
- E. Landscaping
- E-1 Reinforce existing landscape character of the neighborhood
- E-2 Landscape to enhance the building on site

Staff Comments 1st EDG

The need to conduct a second EDG meeting was agreed to by all parties. As discussed above, the architect should bring the following studies for the next meeting:

- 3-D physical massing models.
- 3-D studies with graphic examples at a more schematic level of the types of design concepts proposed.
- Additional design studies showing perimeter treatments and concepts showing how the campus will be more welcoming to all.
- Additional landscape concept analysis and more concept details of landscaping, including alternative elements that explore providing other opportunities heading into the site and buildings.
- Programming information such as possible location of functional sub-areas such as cafeterias and work out spaces for employees, auditoriums, public reception spaces, etc.

Second EDG Meeting – January 18, 2006

Architect's Presentation - 2nd EDG

The design team was joined by Shannon Nichol, of Gustafson Guthrie Nichol for this presentation. Shannon addressed the landscape concept alternatives requested by the Board at the last meeting. Steve McConnell reviewed the development objectives, design alternatives, and priority guidelines identified at the previous meeting. Conceptual alternatives for the site were reviewed. Conceptual programming information was provided, regarding the location of office, internal convening areas, open spaces and circulation. The concept of the Republican Street entry as a “mixing chamber” was presented, with pedestrian and vehicular circulation, the

main entry to the campus, the visitor's learning center, and the public overlook of the internal courtyards of the campus all convening in this area. The campus master plan was presented, emphasizing the East/West axis with views across the site, the central 'heart' of the campus as expressed through landscaping and a predominant water feature. The presentation emphasized clean roof-scapes, rich gardens and a theme of "humble mindfulness." The Seattle Center Parking garage, although not part of this project, provides interest and activity at the corner of Fifth and Republican Street. The Fifth Avenue façade may meet the property line if security features are located within the ROW, or may be set back 15 to 20 feet if all security features are located on the campus.

Board Clarifying Comments – 2nd EDG

The board asked for additional clarification regarding security features, public access, parking, and the character of the exterior spaces. The absence of an iconic or landmark feature was also noted.

The applicant indicated that they are still exploring options for security, which may include bollards, seating walls and similar features, and that discussion with SDOT about the use of the ROW are ongoing. The public access to the campus will be limited to the overlook feature at the Republican Street entry court. Employees will use the entry court at Republican Street as well. All parking will be located underground. The character of the exterior spaces is still being developed; alternate schemes are still being explored. The lack of an iconic feature was explained as reflective of design objective of a mindful, restrained disposition for the campus.

Public Comments - 2nd EDG

Three members of the public spoke. They questioned the longevity of the proposed view across the site, given the recent and upcoming changes in the South Lake Union area. The need for a strengthened program along Fifth Avenue was noted, with a better North/South connection needed along Fifth. Although the 'potlatch trail' is apparently on hold, it was noted that an opportunity exists for its expression by the private sector. The lack of acknowledgement in the design of the urban street grid and neighborhood character to the north was observed, in that the northern edge of the site at Mercer Street needs to better respond to the surroundings. Better public access, deeper into the site was requested, as was a desire to have the buildings as close as possible to the 5th Ave. ROW (with minimal setback).

Board Deliberation – 2nd EDG

The Board was pleased to see that all parking will be located underground and also had praise for the vista across the campus. The treatment of security at the perimeter was also improved by the choice of more subtle security methods which are less visually intrusive.

However, the campus is extremely internally focused and lacks a strong urban expression. The project needs to better reflect the neighborhood context, including the street grid. The interior of the campus is less important from a design perspective than the relationships to the outside. The street access points have not been addressed to the Board's satisfaction. The Board felt their

previous guidance regarding reaching out and engaging the community and responding to the street grid had been ignored. The buildings aren't visually or functionally contributing to the surrounding community. These issues still need to be addressed.

Although the Sixth Ave. question remains unresolved (to be opened or not) the north façades should reflect the termination of Taylor Ave. N. - not meet it with a blank wall. The Mercer Street façade is over 850 feet in length and is currently monotonous. Fifth Ave. still lacks interest and doesn't meet the guideline for creating human activity along Fifth. The pocket park along Fifth isn't a grand enough gesture for this urban site – perhaps should be traded for a larger public open space such as an entry plaza at 5th and Mercer. The Mercer St. and Fifth Ave. corner is likely to be one of the most viewed locations and could be a grand corner, perhaps the beginning of an entry sequence. With respect to the 'non-iconic' concept, the 5th and Mercer corner could be subtle, but should express a sense of entry, per the Board's original guidance. The current entry at Republican St. is overpowered by the garage and its function as a drive court.

With respect to the 'quiet concept' the Board wants to see a hierarchy of elements. At this scale, the campus reads like an office park or institution and doesn't reflect the urban context. There needs to be a variety of forms, roof shapes, materials and scale. There should be a celebration of the identification of place. There's a missed opportunity for the Foundation to embrace the community and spread its mission.

The design needs to focus much more on the exterior of the campus and the pedestrian experience. The Board asked the design team to review the guidelines provided at the first meeting and continue to develop the design with particular regard to human scale and activity and enlivening the streetscape.

Staff Comments – 2nd EDG

Following the presentation and deliberation, there was a discussion of procedural issues. It is anticipated that there will be two recommendation meetings, to allow for preliminary and final recommendations. The Board also recommended the DPD consider using the Design Review Board in an advisory capacity for future project phases.