

**SECOND DESIGN REVIEW RECOMMENDATION MEETING  
OF  
COMBINED DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD &  
SEATTLE DESIGN COMMISSION**

**August 12, 2008**

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

**Project Number:** 3007149

**Address:** 601 Fourth Avenue

**Applicant:** Brett Allen for Triad Development

**Design Review Board members present:** Matt Allert  
Dana Behar  
Wilmot Gilland  
Kelly Mann

**Design Commission members present:** Karen Kiest  
Dennis Ryan  
Darrel Vange  
Mary Johnston

**Design Review Board members absent:** Jim Falconer  
Marta Falkowska

**DCLU Staff Present:** Mary Pearson, Fleets and Facilities  
Bruce P. Rips, DPD  
Guillermo Romano, DPD  
Ruri Yampolsky, Arts and Cultural Affairs

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**Background**

The Seattle Municipal Civic Center Master Plan (June 1999) provides direction for the development and transformation of city owned property in a four block area between Third and Sixth Avenues and between James and Cherry Streets. The master plan also includes the Seattle Municipal Tower (the former Key Tower). The plan envisions for the Public Safety Building site an office building (private or public) on its northern portion and a terraced plaza and hill-climb on the south. The site remains the last unfinished component of the master plan.

In June and December of 2006, the Department of Fleets and Facilities received responses to a Request for Concepts Due and a Request for Proposals Due respectively. In September 2006, the Seattle Design Commission convened a half-day workshop to provide design guidance on the potential future public spaces on the site. Four key areas of focus (1) the site's size/configuration, 2) context and adjacent use; 3) programming, and 4) character of public space emerged as a means of organizing a series of recommendations. By the spring of 2007, the Department of Fleets and Facilities chose the Seattle Civic Square Group composed of Triad Development, Inc., Foster + Partners, GGLO, Arup, and Atelier Dreiseitl to lead the development effort. Several other companies specializing in retail marketing analysis, communications, sustainability and open space operations also comprise the team. An introduction to the development team and their initial presentation of concepts to the Seattle Design Commission occurred April 19, 2007 with the participation of the Downtown Design Review Board. Two Early Design Guidance meetings followed on June 26, 2007 and August 28, 2007 respectively. Two Recommendation meetings were held June 10, 2008 and August 12, 2008.

Triad Development Inc. will purchase the entire block, develop a tower and plaza, and once constructed, return the plaza to city of Seattle ownership. A Client Group formed from the city's Executive and Legislative branches provides oversight on the development. Because the proposal includes both private and public development (tower and plaza), two bodies possess design review jurisdiction for the project. In an effort to provide an efficient review, the Seattle Design Commission and the Downtown Design Review Board have pledged to coordinate their reviews for the early stages of design development. Once the integration of tower and plaza or open space is assured, these Boards may conclude their reviews separately.

### Proposal

The applicant proposes to design and construct on a full city block (the former location of the city of Seattle Public Safety Building) a complex comprising a mixed-use residential and office tower, a retail pavilion, a civic plaza, and a below-grade parking garage. The tower would be located on the north portion of the block along Cherry Street with its footprint covering approximately 45 percent of the site. The other 55 percent would be devoted to public open space and retail uses. The tower and the plaza would sit above an underground garage with an estimated 600 parking spaces.

Features or elements comprising the plaza include an amphitheater, a connection to the Metro tunnel below Third Ave., retail uses in the tower and along James St. facing onto the plaza, a significant water feature visually connected to the City Hall and Justice Center fountains, and a small pavilion along Third Ave. housing retail uses and elevator access linking the Metro tunnel with the upper level plaza. These features met requirements in the Request for Proposal. The plaza would connect Third and Fourth Avenues and create a visual transition between the City Hall steps and the Civic Square open space. Design concepts also provide pedestrians with circulation through the site from James and Cherry streets. A green roof above retail spaces on the plaza and other sustainable features would be a critical part of the open space and tower development.

At the time of the first Early Design Guidance meeting, the project team presented a series of very preliminary massing studies of the structure illustrating variations on a 340 foot office block with two residential towers rising to 400 feet above the commercial volume. In some permutations, the residential portions merged and rose above the 400 foot height limit. The project team conveyed its interest in continuing to explore tower options before presenting the three or so alternatives to the combined Design Review Board. A Land Use Code amendment has been prepared by DPD staff and approved by the Seattle City Council to allow increased height in the DMC 340/290-400 zone when a parcel abuts a DOC zone and is able to provide a minimum of 25,000 square feet (or 35 percent of lot area whichever is greater) of civic space. The proposed code amendment would not allow greater density in exchange for the height increase.

Early in the conceptual design phase the plaza design conveyed greater architectonic qualities than the tower. A series of wide steps and terraces called the Upper Cascade would extend from James St. on the south to the tower on the north side of the plaza. Pedestrians would descend from Fourth Ave. to a level plaza located at the center of the complex. The tower to the north and a retail structure to the south would flank the plaza. Toward the southwest of the plaza, a structure named the People's Pavilion would rise above the plaza and provide a venue for entertainment and cultural events. A Lower Cascade of steps and terraces would descend toward Third Ave. and the metro tunnel entrance. The applicant intends to integrate regional materials, art and water to form an "urban landscape sculpture" that provides functional spaces for programmed events, circulation and passive recreation. Water would follow the cascading steps and visually link the plaza to the water features at City Hall.

At the second EDG meeting, the applicant proposed creating vehicular access from Cherry, moving the Metro station escalator from a stand alone position on Third Ave. to imbedding the escalator in the retail structure at the corner of Third Ave. and James St. The applicant also presented more explicit tower designs concepts.

The design team's presentation at the Third EDG meeting depicted modifications to the tower's massing, to vehicular circulation and its access from the streets, and to the arrangement of retail and Metro tunnel access from Third Ave. The tower's southern façade formed a gentle concave shape reflecting the plaza's two-dimensional convex shape. The articulation of the facades evolved into alternating ribbons of glazing and opacity above a predominantly fenestrated base. Emerging from the office mass, the residential volume had a vaguely petal shape configuration in plan defined by three rounded corners. The entire residential mass set hard on the tower's eastern edge (Fourth Ave.) occupying roughly half of the footprint of the office plan. The placement of two garage entrances on James Street would allow one-way automobile access into the complex and ingress and egress for trucks. Vehicles of office and residential tenants would enter on James St. and exit the garage onto east bound Cherry St. In this scenario, service vehicles would enter from James St., access the interior loading docks, and turn around within the garage and exit back onto east and west bound James St. The design changed considerably along Third Ave. forming a three-story retail / transit pavilion splitting the previous grand staircase into two smaller but still generous stairs terminating at the Third Ave. sidewalk. An escalator emerging from the Metro tunnel and a retail space would front Third Ave. Above the retail, another retail use faces the heart of the plaza with the structure seen as a backdrop to much

of the activity on the plaza. The glass cylinder known as the People's Pavilion from earlier concepts had been removed as a feature and replaced by the notion that the plaza is a flexible space capable of handling a variety of performances and events of many sizes situated in several areas of the plaza. The plaza's circular form is an appropriate shape for multiple performance venues although the directionality of the steps may impose some limits on that intention. The applicant proposed green roofs or sustainable features over the three structures.

The Board's response focused upon five major areas: site planning and massing, the street edges, the plaza, architectural character and expression, and sustainability.

By the first Recommendation meeting, the applicant proposed several significant changes to both the plaza and the tower. The central portion of the circular plaza evolved into a shallow amphitheater embraced by the newly concave form of the retail pavilion and the sinuous curve of the tower's plaza level. Rounded corners of the tower and the metro station pavilion further emphasized the sense of motion. A wind study analysis of the plaza led to other revisions. The designers enclosed the grand breezeway connecting Cherry St. at mid-block to the plaza and eliminated an exterior staircase linking the corner of James St. and Third Ave. to the plaza level. The changes would help eliminate powerful wind gusts in the plaza. Four elevators in a distinct structure facing Third Ave. would facilitate the passage of Metro Transit riders to and from the station to the plaza area and the retail pavilion. The applicant also proposed eliminating public access to the roof top garden above the retail pavilion. A notable addition to the plaza design was a curved water wall facing the grand steps leading from Third Ave. to the plaza. This waterfall would begin at the circular plaza level and extend to Third Ave.

The tower form also evolved in the period between the EDG and the Recommendation meeting. In order to increase the sense of verticality, the architect aligned the residential floors in plan with the Fourth and Cherry St. facades of the office tower. A crease, visually separating in half the office mass, suggested in elevation two side by side towers with the eastern portion approximately 14 floors higher. On each elevation of the higher tower, a set of two piers expressed on the exterior, emphasizing vertical movement and counterbalancing the horizontality expressed by the ribbon windows, the brise-soleil and continuous spandrels. Tower materials included onyx and limestone at the base, glazing and anodized aluminum above. A glass mechanical screen enclosed a green wall that further enclosed the mechanical equipment penthouse at the tower's upper roof. At the Recommendation meeting, the architect presented other possible resolutions for the top including a halo floating above the roof top mechanical rooms.

The presenter at the second Recommendation meeting identified several significant changes to the plaza and the structures surrounding it. The form of the tower's western base evolved in plan to mirror the eastern half, forming entries into the tower from both Cherry St. and the plaza at the mid-point of the tower plan. Aligned with the crease, which visually separates the office mass into two vertical halves, the new entry points gave reason to shift the circular center of the plaza toward the east and to reduce modestly the number of terraces ringing the amphitheatre. The breezeway evolved from a grand interior promenade along the north south axis to a hallway aligned with the exterior creases above the plaza and Cherry St. In place of the breezeway, a

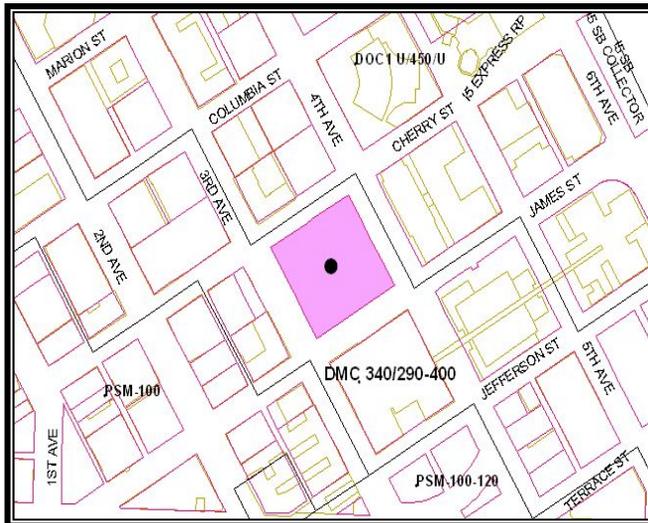
public atrium would occupy the southern portion of the eastern tower block overlooking the plaza. Its advantages include an adjacency to the plaza and a southern exposure.

The proposed design of the Metro pavilion and the retail pavilion also transformed. Seem as distinct structures in form and materials in earlier iterations, the two structures became integrated into one encompassing structure. In reaction to earlier Board guidance, the architect shifted the location of the elevator connection between the plaza and the Metro station shifted from Third Ave. to the corner of Third and James St. This proposed move creates a continuity of retail space along Third Ave. and identifies a more coherent place to enter into both the Civic Square complex and the Metro station. Access to the roof would occur above the western portion of the retail pavilion but remain unavailable to the public along the larger green roof overlooking the southern edge of the plaza.

Selection of an artist to join the development team was announced at the second Recommendation meeting. Ned Kahn, a MacArthur Foundation fellowship winner, attempts to frame natural phenomena in his work. Located throughout the world, his public art can be found locally in the Issaquah Highlands and the University of Washington, Seattle, Department of Oceanography.

### Site and Vicinity

Formerly the location of the city of Seattle's Public Safety Building, the vacant site has had considerable excavation and shoring. Bound by the rights-of-way of Cherry Street, James Street, Third Avenue and Fourth Avenue, the full block site's natural grades slope considerably from Third Ave. to Fourth by approximately 26 feet. The incline from the lowest corner to the highest (compass points south to north) measures roughly 34 feet according to DPD's GIS maps.



The 57,120 square foot site sits amongst a collection of civic buildings belonging to the city of Seattle and King County. Directly across Fourth Ave. lies City Hall (2003) and beyond it stands the Seattle Justice Center (2001). The King County Courthouse (1916) lies across James St. with the King County Administration Building (1971) and the King County Correctional Building (1985) march up hill between James and Jefferson Streets. Significant non-governmental buildings in the vicinity include the Columbia Tower, the Arctic Building, the Dexter Horton Building, the Lyon Building, the St. Charles Hotel, the Alaska Building and the former Morrison Hotel. The Dexter Horton (1922), the Arctic (1916) and the Lyon (1910) possess historic landmark status. The neighborhood's character is illuminated by the remarkable facades of the Dexter Horton and Arctic buildings with their intricate terra cotta ornamentation and by the more recent insertions of the Bohlin, Cywinski, Jackson designed City Hall and NBBJ's Justice Center with their

harmonious mix of buff stone, glass and metal and their elements of sustainable design. Currently the area is witnessing the conversion of the Arctic and Alaska Buildings from offices into hotels.

The site possesses a Downtown Mixed Commercial (DMC) with a 340/290-400 zoning classification. Non-residential uses have a height limit of 340 feet. Residential uses have a base height limit of 290 feet with an upper limit of 400 feet achieved with bonuses. This zone just north of Yesler Way runs from First Ave. and Madison St. up the hill to Yesler and Interstate 5. To the north, the zoning changes to Downtown Office Core One (DOC 1 U/450-U) with unlimited and 450 foot height limits. The Pioneer Square Mixed (PSM 100) with a 100 foot height limit zone lies to the south of the site.

Third and Fourth Avenues rights-of-way measure 84 feet and possess city classification as principal transit and Class I pedestrian streets with 18 foot sidewalk requirements. Third Ave. has street level use and property line façade requirements in the Seattle Land Use Code. The rights-of-way widths for Cherry and James Streets are both 66 feet. Classified as both Class II pedestrian and principal arterial streets, they have 12 foot sidewalk requirements and lie within a designated view corridor. James St. carries traffic both east and west bound while Cherry St. is one way east bound. Third Ave. runs both north and south bound; Fourth Ave. travels one-way north bound.

**DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES: EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETINGS, JUNE 26, 2007, AUGUST 28, 2007, and NOVEMBER 13, 2007.**

At the Early Design Guidance meetings held on June 26, 2007, August 28, 2007 and November 13, 2007 and after visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, the Combined Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance and identified by letter and number those siting and design guidelines found in the City of Seattle's "*Design Review: Guidelines for Downtown*" of highest priority to this project:

- A-1 Respond to the physical environment.
- A-2 Enhance the skyline.
- B-1 Respond to the neighborhood context.
- B-2 Create a transition in bulk & scale.
- B-3 Reinforce the positive urban form & architectural attributes of the immediate area.
- B-4 Design a well-proportioned & unified building.
- C-1 Promote pedestrian interaction.
- C-2 Design facades of many scales.
- C-3 Provide active—not blank—facades.
- C-4 Reinforce building entries.
- C-5 Encourage overhead weather protection.
- D-1 Provide inviting & usable open space.
- D-2 Enhance the building with landscaping.
- D-3 Provide elements that define the place.

- D-4 Provide appropriate signage.
- D-5 Provide adequate lighting.
- D-6 Design for personal safety & security.
- E-1 Minimize curb cut impacts.
- E-2 Integrate parking facilities.
- E-3 Minimize the presence of service areas.

**DESIGN REVIEW BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY: JUNE 10, 2008 and AUGUST 12, 2008 MEETINGS**

On June 10, 2008, the Combined Design Review Board convened for a Preliminary Recommendation meeting. Site, landscaping, and floor plans, and elevations were presented for the Board members' consideration. A second Recommendation meeting with the Combined Design Review Board met on August 12, 2008.

**Public Comment:** At the first Recommendation meeting, twenty-five individuals signed-in at the meeting. No one commented upon the project.

Fourteen individuals signed-in at the second Recommendation meeting on August 12, 2008. Members of the public offered the following comments:

- The new circulation diagrams are improved and better explain the complexity of the site.
- The new scheme lacks a ceremonial promenade from the north. The breezeway is constricted and less important.
- At the very least, the green wall should relate to the green roof above it. The vegetation should cascade down from the roof. In general, the green wall is a lost opportunity. The design should provide exposure from the south and activate the elevation.
- Both the Third Ave and James St. and the 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. and James St. corners are brutal. They lack relief. The façade for the Metro entry is stagnant and unwelcoming at a particularly critical intersection. An escalator is preferable.
- The Third Ave. and Cherry St. façade is simply banal. Windows lack proportions.
- The lack of overhead weather protection along the edges has little justification and sets a poor precedent. The verbiage explaining the departures for canopies doesn't justify the reason for omitting them.
- The sidewalk widths should conform to the 12 foot regulations rather than request a minimal departure.
- The tower expression remains predominantly horizontal. In general, the tower lacks interest. The top is quite pedestrian.
- Lighting for the roof needs more specifics.
- The west and south edges of the base appear as if there are two architectural designers. The facades have very different aesthetics.
- The plaza lid extending from Fourth Ave. causes many design challenges.
- Look to the plaza at Two Union Sq. for an example of an open space adjacency to the street that works well. Two Union Sq. has multiple access points from the two adjacent streets.

- Because of the bus stops along James St., there should be adequate overhead weather protection, a bench, shelter and lighting for the transit riders to create a comfortable and secure experience.
- The perception of open space does not appear to meet the amount of 50 percent that was stipulated in the campus master plan.
- An escalator at Third Ave. and James St. should be reconsidered. The escalator at Wells Fargo is a good example of one that is out on a plaza and protected.
- The exterior design for the Metro Station at Third and James does not suggest a station. It should be much more dramatic and interesting. The subway station shown in the design review packet by Foster and Partners is much more expressive and interesting.
- Add overhead weather protection on Cherry and James streets. Nine months of the year the covering is needed in Seattle. The design sacrifices the comfort of transit riders and pedestrians for the applicant's desire to have people traverse the plaza when multiple options of pedestrian movement are necessary for good urban design.
- It does not appear that a glare study has been conducted for the plaza as the extensive amount of glazing on the tower will reflect light onto the plaza.
- The tower design is simply unimaginative when contrasted with another speculative office building, Two Union Sq. which has interesting architectonic moves, variation in the four façades, and a more interesting top.
- What happened to the trees that were proposed for the roof top in the previous scheme?
- The shading features (brise soleils) have been removed from the tower. These provided depth to a thin and generic shell. The sun shades should be included on the tower as they added much to the design in spite of their horizontality.
- The building design needs a sense of scale and a distinguishing character.

**Board Recommendations:** After considering the proposed design and the project context, hearing public comment and reconsidering the previously stated design priorities the Combined Design Review Board members came to the following conclusions on how the applicant met the identified design objectives. Board comments from the second meeting (August 12, 2008) are in italics and dated.

**A. Site Planning & Massing**

**A-1 Respond to the physical environment. Develop an architectural concept and compose the building's massing in response to geographic conditions and patterns of urban form found beyond the immediate context of the building site.**

In plan and in elevation, the plaza and the buildings continued to become more curvaceous in appearance as the massing of the retail pavilion began to embrace or wrap around the central plaza and amphitheater. Pedestrian movement through the proposed plaza would follow sinuous paths along the retail pavilion and diagonally sweep across the site from Fourth and James to the steps leading to Third Ave. The base of the tower, the Board suggested, could be further rounded to enhance the sense of enclosure surrounding the plaza. (June 10, 2008)

*The Board praised the designer's decision to combine the south retail pavilion and the west retail/Metro station pavilion into a single encompassing form. Shifting the Metro station elevators to the corner met with approval. However, the choice of materials and fortress-like appearance along the street edges was of significant concern and not acceptable. See Guidance B-1 for more analysis. (August 12, 2008)*

**A-2 Enhance the skyline. Design the upper portion of the building to promote visual interest and variety in the downtown skyline.**

The Combined Board emphasized the need for a greater commitment to expressing the tower's verticality. Shaping the apex of the tower should enhance the sense of vertical lift. The concept of a box within a box (the mechanical penthouse surrounded by green walls within a glass enclosure) met with little enthusiasm by the Board members. A roof better expressing the technology of sustainability would be welcomed. The alternative concept of a halo appearing to float above the tower did not elicit reaction. The Board envisions a more powerful image on the city skyline. (June 10, 2008)

*The Board requested that the architect continue to refine the top of the tower with the intent of producing a more elegant presence on the Seattle skyline.*

*The architect's should continue to refine the building's skin. A mock-up of the glazing and spandrel system will need to be presented at the next Recommendation meeting. (August 12, 2008)*

**B. Architectural Expression**

**B-1 Respond to the neighborhood context. Develop an architectural concept and compose the major building elements to reinforce desirable urban features existing in the surrounding neighborhood.**

Elevators would access the Metro station and the plaza. Several of the Board members noted that escalators would provide a stronger visual connection to the plaza. Although the directness of the route from station to plaza has improved in the most recent scheme, the Board noted that lack of visual clues to the plaza hindered the current design. The Board members commented that the massing of the metro pavilion needed a stronger expression of verticality and an identity distinct from the general design of the overall complex. The Metro pavilion and the retail pavilion on Third Ave. look large when in reality these structures would be small structures particularly in contrast to the tower and nearby buildings. The Board asked that the design for these structures be reconsidered to reflect their intimate size. The elevator tower could also be quite fun---a more whimsical structure than the others.

In a related issue, the Board, noting the removal of the proposed escalator at the Metro / retail pavilion, requested a direct connection to the plaza from the southwest corner of the site. Passage through the site without the use of an elevator was important.

The placement of stairs above the garage entry on James St. appeared confusing to the Board due to lack of access from the street. (June 10, 2008)

*The entire base of the complex remains quite problematic. At Third Ave. and James St., the design of the Metro access pavilion lacks any visual clue that it connects to the Metro station or the plaza above the sidewalk grade. The proposed monolithic corner elements framing the entrance should produce a more welcoming corner that attracts people up to the plaza. The goals for the designers are to create much greater transparency and a building form that clearly indicates the function of the building as a connector to the Metro station and the plaza. The enclosure for the elevators should convey a sense of security for its users and an expression of its function. A base with these qualities can anchor the corner and exude a strong presence.*

*The Board suggested that the retail elevator, exit stairs, and the bike storage area should be ganged within the Metro elevator pavilion.*

*Perplexed by the choice of materials on Fourth Ave. and James St., the Board observed that an entirely opaque prow containing an exit stairs made little sense at this important corner. In fact, nowhere along its three street edges does the proposed structure announce itself as a retail pavilion. The structure should simply communicate what's inside the retail pavilion. (August 12, 2008)*

**B-2 Create a transition in bulk & scale. Compose the massing of the building to create a transition to the height, bulk, and scale of development in neighboring or nearby less-intensive zones.**

The architectonics of the building base should respond to the richness of the surrounding structures. A datum line expressed in the overhang and in the retail and Metro pavilions relate to adjacent buildings. The design of the entrances, fenestration, materials, canopies and structural system at the base should contribute to the streetscape with the same exuberance as the neighboring landmark buildings. (June 10, 2008)

*The earlier guidance remains unheeded. The Board requested a full redesign of the base at Third Ave. and Cherry St. citing the limited amount of transparency (the basement like quality of the facades), the awkward relationship of the one-story base with the columns above it, and lack of adequate detailing. The circulation above the limestone base lacked a strong raison d'être and would be inaccessible to most of the tenants and the public. The success of the restaurant and bar across Cherry provides more reason for greater transparency and a richness of detailing on the façade. The lower base at street level should be welcoming and entirely integrated with the higher base that extends up to the office level. It must have some form of weather protection along its edges. (August 12, 2008)*

**B-3 Reinforce the positive urban form & architectural attributes of the immediate area. Consider the predominant attributes of the immediate neighborhood and reinforce desirable siting patterns, massing arrangements, and streetscape characteristics of nearby development.**

Without the circular stair leading to the retail pavilion roof and the introduction of water at the amphitheater, the Fourth Ave. frontage lacks a strong civic response to City Hall and its plaza. The gesture of the stream moving downhill from its source at the Justice Center and the grand stairs that define the character and section of City Hall's exterior and interior should be received by the proposed complex and it, in turn, should contribute its own civic reply beginning at Fourth Ave. (June 10, 2008)

*The introduction of a water feature along Fourth Ave. meets the earlier guidance the Board provided and complies with the campus master plan's vision of a stream beginning at the Justice Center and descending toward Third Ave. The water feature on Fourth Ave. will visually connect with the fountains at City Hall.*

*The east end of the retail pavilion should possess a suitable civic gesture. An exit stair enclosed in an opaque prow speaks neither of symbolic nor of visual connection between City Hall and the civic plaza. The opaque walls at the corner of Fourth and James are further addressed by the Board in guidance B-1. (August 12, 2008)*

**B-4 Design a well-proportioned & unified building. Compose the massing and organize the publicly accessible interior and exterior spaces to create a well-proportioned building that exhibits a coherent architectural concept. Design the architectural elements and finish details to create a unified building, so that all components appear integral to the whole.**

See written comments for guideline C-2. The vertical crease or modulation in the façade to differentiate two vertical shafts within the overall massing met with the Board's approval. The Board asked for greater differentiation of the building's skin in order to create a livelier and less monotonous façade. Two Union Square represents a local example of a tower in which the façades vary from one another yet remain part of a strong compositional idea. (June 10, 2008)

*Board members praised the different exterior expression between the residential portion of the tower and the office block.*

*The north façade of the retail pavilion lacks architectural expression. The architect will need to provide elevations with much greater detail. (August 12, 2008)*

## **C. The Streetscape**

**C-1 Promote pedestrian interaction. Spaces for street level uses should be designed to engage pedestrians with the activities occurring within them. Sidewalk-related spaces should be open to the general public and appear safe and welcoming.**

In plan, the scheme remains internally focused around the plaza. Proposed entries into the office and residential lobbies would be located on Fourth Ave and Cherry St. respectively. Third Ave. would have entries into the retail spaces and the Metro pavilion. Access to the proposed retail pavilion would occur within the plaza and not from the surrounding streets including James. The Board did not question the placement of the entries. (June 10, 2008)

*See Board guidance B-2 for comments on the proposed structure's Third and Cherry corner.*

*Board members welcomed the shift of the Metro Station from Third Ave. to the corner at Third and Cherry streets. In general, the corners are fortress-like, particularly at both corners of James St. The corners and the James St. façade starkly contrast with “the magical world of the plaza.” What should be gateways to the plaza appear more like barricades. (August 12, 2008)*

*The Board encouraged the applicant to design an attractive street frontage for the retail space along Third Ave.*

**C-2 Design facades of many scales. Design architectural features, fenestration patterns, and materials compositions that refer to the scale of human activities contained within. Building facades should be composed of elements scaled to promote pedestrian comfort, safety, and orientation.**

The Board reiterated its desire to see more architectonic detail at the tower base fronting Cherry St. in order to have the structure acknowledge the building's relationship with the landmark Arctic Building.

The applicant introduced the use of limestone and onyx at the base, the former as a means of continuity with the Justice Center and Seattle City Hall. Extensive amounts of onyx as shown at the base (see Cherry St.) would require departures from the Land Use Code due to the extensiveness of blank walls along the street edge.

The facades of the building should respond to variations in solar and climatic conditions, to views, and to other potential influences that would imbue the structure's skin with interest and meaning. Board members found the ribbon windows, spandrel banding and brise-soleils too insistent. In spite of the visibility of the piers on the tower's eastern half, the crease in the north and south elevations, and the change of window treatment at the residential levels, the Board sought more variation and an increased sense of verticality in the desire to provide a building of many related scales. (June 10, 2008)

*All or portions of the first several office levels of the tower facing (south elevation) the plaza should respond to the plaza's presence. By adding balconies or some modification to the building skin or form, a greater marriage of the tower and the plaza could occur. The tower's lower south façade should provide opportunity for the office tenants to interact with the on-going activities on the plaza. (August 12, 2008)*

**C-3 Provide active, not blank, facades. Buildings should not have large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks.**

The extensive use of onyx along Fourth Ave. would require departures from the Seattle Land Use Code. It is unlikely the Board would grant a departure for blank walls along Cherry Street. (June 10, 2008)

*The blank wall along James St. is mostly inhospitable to pedestrian comfort and safety. Revision to the green screen and added overhead weather protection along the façade are discussed in guidelines C-5 and D-2. (August 12, 2008)*

**C-4 Reinforce building entries. To promote pedestrian comfort, safety, and orientation, reinforce the building's entry.**

The lack of an entry or a visible gateway to the plaza from Third and James troubled the Board. During the EDG process, the development team emphasized the importance of the Third and James corner for pedestrians from the Pioneer Square neighborhood. The loss of the steps proposed at the third EDG meeting, the lack of a door into the retail space and the blank walls along James St. suggested that the design was turning its back upon this area and its pedestrians.

The introduction of the crease separating the office block into two halves potentially creates confusion in plan and elevation in terms of the legibility of entrances. The former breezeway functions as an entry and enclosed pass-through connecting Cherry St. and the plaza. Yet, the creases on both north and south elevations suggest major building entrances as well.

The breezeway should be a compelling space. It should carry the plaza into the building and out onto Cherry St. The drawings did not convey that it is meant to be a wonderful space. (June 10, 2008)

*Responding to Board guidance from the June 10<sup>th</sup> Recommendation meeting, the applicant resolved the confusion in plan and elevation created from the introduction of the vertical crease by aligning the major plaza entry and an entry from Cherry St. with the crease. While diminishing the breezeway concept, the move has created greater legibility and reenergized the plaza in response.*

*The Board requested modification of both the residential and office entries. The residential entry on Cherry St. lies uncomfortably close to the vehicular exit. Slight realignment of the driveway or a clearer separation of the pedestrian pathway to the lobby from the route of the vehicles should occur.*

*The office lobby entrance on Fourth Ave. appears squat and decidedly out of scale with the tower height. Notching in two or three bays directly above the doors or creating a surround inclusive of the piers up to the second spandrel would accentuate the vertical expression of this formal entrance providing a less prosaic entry and one that would celebrate the sense of arrival. Board members noted the undesirably elaborate or circuitous pedestrian movement made from the Fourth Ave. entry to the bank of elevators.*

*The public breezeway's function, mentioned above, has not been replaced by a similar grand space. The development team has proposed a retail space adjacent to the plaza with its exposure to the south. (August 12, 2008)*

**C-5 Encourage overhead weather protection. Encourage project applicants to provide continuous, well-lit, overhead weather protection to improve pedestrian comfort and safety along major pedestrian routes.**

The applicant proposes a significant departure from the Land Use Code's requirement to provide overhead weather protection along the street fronts. The proposal shows Third Avenue in partial compliance. The applicant argues that installation of canopies on the western half of Cherry St. would be awkward requiring that they hang them from columns. The eastern half of Cherry St. would not have an upper level building overhang or a canopy to protect pedestrians. In the same scheme, the only other street facing canopy would be located at an entrance to the office tower on Fourth Ave.

The development team argues that the lack of overhead weather protection on James St. is justified by the proposal of an alternative pedestrian route, albeit less direct, using an elevator and continuing underneath a continuous balcony along the retail pavilion. If used in this way, the alternative route would bring pedestrians past retail spaces and into the central plaza. The reasoning suggests either one route or another rather than promoting multiple routes equally compelling dependent upon the pedestrian's need at the time.

The Board requested canopies at Third and Cherry as well as along Cherry St. The Board expressed a readiness to approve the departure for James St. but held off approving it based on more information about the green wall and further analysis from DPD. (June 10, 2008)

*The lack of weather protection along both James and Cherry streets as well as at major corners should be reconsidered in order to provide pedestrian comfort. In addition, the applicant's packet depicting weather protection along the terrace above street level on Cherry St. was misleading as none of the actual sidewalk received protection. A canopy at the bus stop on James St. would acknowledge transit rider needs. Good urban design exploits a multiplicity of pathways or routes. Providing weather protection only at the plaza in the east west axis ignores the pedestrians who wish to use a less circuitous route without a series of steps and elevators. Along with the redesign of the building's base at James, Cherry and Third streets, overhead weather protection should be provided along Cherry St., wrapped at a minimum around the site's four corners and at the bus stop on James. (August 12, 2008)*

**D Public Amenities**

**D-1 Provide inviting & usable open space. Design public open spaces to promote a visually pleasing, safe, and active environment for workers, residents, and visitors. Views and solar access from the principal area of the open space should be especially emphasized.**

The Board praised the singularity of the designer's vision of the plaza since its introduction to both Boards over a year ago. The plaza concept has not significantly changed.

The Board generally favored public access to the green roof above the retail pavilion. In spite of the applicant's argument that public access would diminish the amount of functional green

space, the Board felt that access would provide an alternative place to enjoy the outdoors and witness the spectacle on the plaza. The Board further cited the opportunity to learn about a fully green rooftop.

The pedestrian path along the retail pavilion would likely be dark much of the day due to its northern exposure and the balcony overhead. Solar studies of the path and plaza analyzing conditions should be provided for the next Recommendation meeting. The Board also noted the narrowness of the pedestrian passageway and the risk of compromising it further when retail tenants push carts or racks outside toward the plaza. The addition of more exciting landscape elements along with added planting to the plaza's south edge was encouraged.

The Board complimented the design of the plaza's north end with its ramp, adjacent retail uses and water features. (June 10, 2008)

*Achieving the Board's desire to have a balance of larger open spaces and discreet spaces on the plaza appeared to be successful. Modifications to the plaza continue, yet the strong conceptual idea remains and is refreshed in the landscape architect's response to Board's insights and the evolution of the tower. (August 12, 2008)*

**D-2 Enhance the building with landscaping. Enhance the building and site with substantial landscaping—which includes special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, and site furniture, as well as living plant material.**

The landscape architect's strategy has been to minimize the amount of plants and trees on the plaza and have copious amounts of plant material on the roofs. Recycled granite pavers and curbs, terrazzo, concrete and stone would be used in the central plaza. Along Cherry St., the planting area would have cobblestones, ferns and grasses in the terraces.

Several other elements of the plaza should be reconsidered. The back side of the Metro pavilion will be quite visible and important. The installation of a large video screen should not replace good design for the wall. The height of the water wall could inhibit use of the steps into the plaza. Future drawings should depict the view into the plaza from Third Ave.

Mentioned in earlier guidance meetings, the need for small intimate places within the larger plaza is a paramount concern. The design continues to improve but the landscape architects should add more distinct spaces. Board members noted the baroness of City Hall plaza with its copious amounts of concrete and too few trees to shade its users. (June 10, 2008)

*The green screen on the south elevation of the retail pavilion appears appliqué and is detached from the roof top as well as the sidewalk level. It covers service functions which in themselves could be wonderfully expressed on the exterior. The green screen's presence does not mitigate the zoning code's limits on blank walls because its placement begins eight feet above the sidewalk. Redesign of the James St. elevation should provide more transparency and literally connect the green screen to the sidewalk level and allow the green roof to cascade over the wall to join the green screen. The green screen should not be an excuse to eliminate overhead weather protection along James St. (August 12, 2008)*

**D-3 Provide elements that define the place. Provide special elements on the facades, within public open spaces, or on the sidewalk to create a distinct, attractive, and memorable “sense of place” associated with the building.**

The Board questioned what made the proposed complex an attraction. The tower appeared to them as not memorable and the retail / Metro pavilions as too similar to the tower in material choices.

The notion that the entire complex had a significant sustainability strategy seemed, to the Board, to be diminished due to the removal of the “sustainability pavilion” and the lack of information in the design review packet covering installation of green technologies. An important green element, the retail pavilion roof, would no longer be accessible and the green wall on James St. seemed devoid of context. At the next Recommendation meeting, more information, similar to earlier presentations, should elucidate the use of green strategies and specific technology. Guidance by the Board suggested wrapping portions of the green wall to Third and Fourth Avenues and allowing the green roof to spill over onto the wall. (June 10, 2008)

*The evolution of the civic space has much improved and its relationship to the retail pavilion is better. The Board noted that the proposed plaza will create a strong sense of place while the tower in itself does not.*

*Explanation of how the public atrium will function is needed for the next meeting. It appears to the Board as more private than the former sustainability pavilion and less likely to contribute to the liveliness of the plaza. (August 12, 2008)*

**D-4 Provide appropriate signage. Design signage appropriate for the scale and character of the project and immediate neighborhood. All signs should be oriented to pedestrians and/or persons in vehicles on streets within the immediate neighborhood.**

For the next Recommendation meeting, preliminary signage concepts should be presented to the Board. (June 10, 2008)

*For the next Recommendation meeting, signage concepts should be presented to the Board. (August 12, 2008)*

**D-5 Provide adequate lighting. To promote a sense of security for people downtown during nighttime hours, provide appropriate levels of lighting on the building facade, on the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, and on signage.**

For the next Recommendation meeting, preliminary plaza and tower lighting concepts should be presented to the Board. (June 10, 2008)

*For the next Recommendation meeting, plaza and tower lighting concepts should be presented to the Board. (August 12, 2008)*

**D-6 Design for personal safety & security. Design the building and site to enhance the real and perceived feeling of personal safety and security in the immediate area.**

With the use of elevators as the primary connection to the Metro tunnel, the applicant should respond to perceptions of security concerns not associated with the openness of escalators. Lighting concepts for the plaza will be important in order to evaluate security issues. (June 10, 2008)

*The elevator pavilion linking Metro to the plaza continues to raise security concerns. The applicant must address these concerns at the next meeting. See guidance B-1. (August 12, 2008)*

**E Vehicular Access & Parking. Minimizing the Adverse Impacts**

**E-1 Minimize curb cut impacts. Minimize adverse impacts of curb cuts on the safety and comfort of pedestrians.**

The Board did not comment on the size of the curb cuts. (June 10, 2008)

**E-2 Integrate parking facilities. Minimize the visual impact of parking by integrating parking facilities with surrounding development. Incorporate architectural treatments or suitable landscaping to provide for the safety and comfort of people using the facility as well as those walking by.**

*The Board observed that the bicycle storage area should be closer to the transit station. Will the developer supply shower facilities for the tenants who commute by bike? (August 12, 2008)*

**E-3 Minimize the presence of service areas. Locate service areas for trash dumpsters, loading docks, mechanical equipment, and the like away from the street front where possible. Screen from view those elements which for programmatic reasons cannot be located away from the street front.**

An expansive green wall conceals the service functions along James St. In general, the Board found the wall compelling if not engaging at street level. The Board members agree that James St. is the preferred street for service access and use. (June 10, 2008)

**DEPARTURES**

STANDARD	REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	JUSTIFICATION	RECOMMENDATION
1. Overhead Weather Protection. SMC 23.49.018	Continuous overhead weather protection shall be required for new development along entire street frontage.	Eliminate OWP at radiused corners and along the James St. and Cherry street frontages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Installation of canopies along James St. will have a detrimental effect on the proposed green wall. Staff note: not a reason for a</li> </ul>	Applicant will be revising the base of complex. Overhead weather

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>departure.</li> <li>Protection along Cherry St. would limit bike racks; canopies would detract from a defined sense of place; detract from building proportions; and detract from building unity.</li> </ul>	<p>protection should be included along all streets in order to provide pedestrian comfort and safety.</p>
2. Façade Modulation. SMC 23.49.058B.	Façade lengths limited to 80' above the 500' elevation and to 100' above the 240' elevation.	Proposes a Cherry St. façade with a 102'10.5" unmodulated length on residential portion of tower and a 117'10.5" unmodulated length on commercial portion of tower.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If footprint of tower is maintained, the tower would have to move further south thus reducing the amount of open space on the plaza.</li> </ul>	The justification does not explain why it would better meet the guidelines. The minimum amount of open space / retail has been determined.
3. Sidewalk Widths. SMC 23.49.022	Cherry and James Streets are principal streets with 12' sidewalk widths.	Existing sidewalk on Cherry St is 11'8". Existing sidewalk on James St. is 11'11". Maintain existing condition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change would be minimal.</li> </ul>	
4. Blank Façade SMC 23.49.056D.3a	Class II pedestrian street (James St.) and exceeds 7.5% slope. Blank façade between 4-8 feet above sidewalk shall not exceed 30 feet, but may be increased to 60' if providing façade with visual interest.	Provide green screen on James St. as visual interest. Proposal exceeds the 60' maximum on James with 138'10" blank wall (102'2" green screen).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Green screen is active façade as it grows and moves with wind.</li> </ul>	Green wall is above the 8' height limit and would not be acceptable as a modification of the blank wall requirements.
5. Transparency SMC 23.49.056C.4c	Class II slopes with a greater than 7.5% slope require 25% transparency between 4-8' above sidewalk.	Provide 19.7% transparency along James St.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides living wall.</li> </ul>	<p>Percentage is less than the 19.7% applicant designated.</p> <p>Green screen is not necessarily more active than providing transparency at base.</p>

**SUMMARY**

For the third Recommendation meeting, the applicant’s packet and presentation will focus on five general areas: 1) redesign of the base at three corners of the site (Third & James, Third & Cherry and Fourth and James) and along Third Ave., James and Cherry street frontages with particular attention to transparency and overhead weather protection; 2) redesign of the Metro pavilion; 3) materials specification for the tower and plaza and a final landscape plan; 4) refinements to the tower with attention to the building’s skin, portions of the office tower directly above the plaza; the office entrance and the roof top; and 5) articulation of the

departures with clear diagrams and a table describing the code requirements, precisely how much the proposal deviates from compliance and how the proposal better meets the design guidelines.

Applicant response to these broad design areas shall be submitted to DPD in a timely manner in order for staff to evaluate them by October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

### **STAFF COMMENTS**

In addition to responding to the guidelines and providing plans and elevations, the Board explicitly stated that the following issues should be addressed by the next meeting:

- A site plan of the complex which includes the entire civic center.
- Floor plans (with north arrow and scale) of all significantly different levels of the project.
- Sections (with scale) cut through the project in east-west and north-south directions to show different levels and include vertical dimensions. One east-west section looking toward tower should include City Hall.
- Elevations of the project (with scale) from all four surrounding streets and elevations of major facades from inside the plaza.
- Large detail elevations of the major elements of the base. Elevations of Cherry St. should include City Hall.
- Model of the plaza and towers.
- Perspectives of the project as a whole in context from street level---and from City Hall, etc.
- Continued perspectives from street and plaza levels to show character of building and spaces, entrances, canopies etc.
- More detailed information on the design of the tower roof top and mechanical space.
- Continued development of landscape plans at various levels.
- Studies of night illumination and signage appropriate to project.
- Clarification and justification for departure requests.
- Materials boards and a mock-up of the skin.
- Dimension floor plans, elevations, sections and site plan.

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