

# EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING #2 for 3007182 AND INTRODUCTION OF COMBINED ½ BLOCK SCHEME

## THE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Meeting Date: December 11, 2007

Report Date: December 21, 2007

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### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Project Number: 3007182 (related to 3005557)

Address: 1923 Fifth Avenue &  
(1903 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue)

Applicant: Alec Carlin, for Multi Capital Group

**Board Members Present:** Wilmot Gilland  
Mark Hinshaw (substitute)  
Kelly Mann  
Marta Falkowska

Board Members Absent: Jim Falconer (recused)  
Matt Allert

Staff Member Present: Vince Lyons, DR Manager for Bruce Rips, DPD planner

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### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

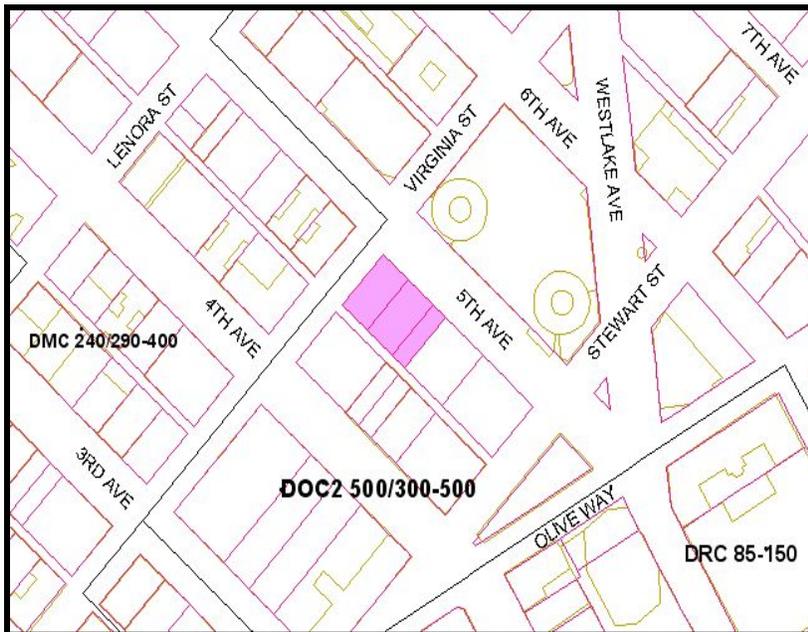
The applicant proposes to design and construct a 500 foot tower comprising nine floors of hotel, 30 floors of residential, ground floor commercial uses, amenity areas and eight below grade parking levels. Three low-rise, buildings (including the Icon Grill) occupy the site's three parcels extending along the west side of Fifth Avenue from Virginia Street.

There was an earlier Early Design Guidance meeting on this north tower on July 31, 2007. The complete report is available in the MUP file at DPD and on the Design Review web page [www.seattle.gov/designreview](http://www.seattle.gov/designreview) (click on "archive" bar and enter the 3005577 project number).

The goal of this EDG #2 meeting was to bring the north (Pagoda) tower review up to the level of review of the south (Heron) tower which will allow the applicant to apply for a MUP application.. In addition, DPD requested that the applicant develop analysis for a scheme that expands the site to include the whole half block fronting 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This is in response to the

fact that the applicant has informed DPD that they are in the process of securing control of the Avis parking structure property which divides the north and south tower properties under review.  
Site and Vicinity Description

The development site, zoned Downtown Office Core 2 with a 300 to 500-foot height limit (DOC2 500/300-500), is located on the southwest corner of the Virginia Street and Fifth Avenue intersection. It lies on the eastern portion of the block bounded by Stewart and Virginia Streets, Fourth and Fifth Avenues. A public alley abuts the site. To the north across Virginia St., the zoning transitions to the lower height zone of Downtown Mixed Commercial with a maximum height of 400 feet (DMC 240/290-400).



The 16,200 square foot site extends approximately 120 feet on Virginia Street and approximately 150 feet on Fifth Avenue. A 16 foot wide alley currently separates the site from the Escala (under construction) at Fourth and Virginia streets. By the Escala's completion, the alley should increase to 18 feet. The site slopes upward approximately six feet from Fifth Ave. to the alley.

Comprising the same block face as the proposal are the Avis parking garage and surface parking lot at the corner of

Stewart St. and Fifth Ave. (the site of the Heron Tower proposal). The two Westin towers lie directly across Fifth Ave. Behind the three subject parcels, the Escala condominium tower is currently under construction. Across Virginia St. lies the Hotel Andrea (1925), the Griffin Building (office and retail, 1927), the Sheridan Apartments (1914) and the Westin garage (1981).

Several Seattle landmarks lie within blocks of the project site. These include the following: the monorail, McGraw Square, the Times Square Building, the Medical Dental Building, Nordstrom Downtown, and Macy's Downtown. The Centennial and Securities Buildings are grand structures constructed in 1925 and 1913 respectively. Other significant structures in the vicinity include Westlake Mall, the Westin Hotel towers across Fifth Ave. A sense of eclecticism and lack of continuity pervade the immediate vicinity. With the terminus of the future trolley adjacent to McGraw Square as well as initial planning efforts to create another plaza in the Westlake right of way just north of the square, the city of Seattle seeks to imbue the district with a coherence currently missing.

Virginia St., a Class II pedestrian and minor arterial, runs one-way eastbound and Fifth Ave., also a Class I pedestrian street and major arterial, travels one way southbound. One-way eastbound Olive Way merges into Stewart St. at Fourth Ave. east of the Times Square Building. Fourth Ave. is one-way streets northbound. The convergence of Westlake Avenue and Fifth Avenue as well as that of Olive Way and Stewart St. forms a series of flatiron shaped parcels. The form of the Times Square Building most elegantly expresses the street pattern. McGraw Square forms a small public plaza amidst the Westin Hotel, a Bank of America branch, and the Times Square Building. The monorail travels in the Fifth Ave. right of way with two of its supporting columns across from the subject site. The alley will likely need to be widened by two feet. The Land Use Code proscribes a 12 foot wide sidewalk along Virginia St. and a 15 foot wide sidewalk on Fifth Ave.

## **ARCHITECT'S PRESENTATION**

The design packet for this project is available on the web page [www.seattle.gov/designreview](http://www.seattle.gov/designreview) and going to the "archive" bar on the left of the screen. This report will refer to page numbers in the packet for ease of understanding this EDG #2 Report.

### **Part One of Presentation: North Tower**

The architects showed three massing options for the north tower on pages 11-16, each emphasizing the spatial relationships to the Escala project immediately to the west of the proposed north tower, the Westin Hotel towers to the east across 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and to the proposed south tower and the existing Centennial building. The preferred scheme 1A is shown on page 14 -16. The scheme is basically two rectangular shafts terminating in opposing angled building tops. Each tower shaft is eroded at all four corners and with smaller insets in the middle of the north and south facades in order to optimize light and air, privacy and view opportunities available to the project and surrounding structures. Individual unit facades in the tower have angled opposing facades to minimize direct views into the adjacent existing and proposed structures.

The seven story base contains retail at the ground level with hotel amenity spaces occupying the next 6 stories including pool, restaurant, ballrooms etc (p.21). The tower is similar to the south tower but more like a brother than a twin, with the design attempting to show a different response to the corner. Two different rooftop designs were present with one resembling the same design proposed for the Heron Tower (south) ---a sloping roof covering a solarium, amenity area, roof gardens, cistern and smokestack, micro-turbines, and supporting photovoltaic cells. The other top has opposing sloping rooftop forms.

### **Part Two of Presentation: Assumes a full half block development on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

The architects showed two different programs for the north tower: One with a 7 story element between the two towers containing large entry lobby and 5 stories of open retail atrium floors and a hotel component in the north tower and south tower (see section p.24)s. The second scheme shows a 5 floor retail element over the lobby with 14 floors of office in the tower and 9 stories of office over the retail base (see section p.34).

Page 34 shows the proposed preferred concept sketches and diagrams for the combined overall tower floor plans and tower massing and sculpting. The architects believe that this half block tower design parti now optimizes the positive design objectives and minimizes the negative aspects of the tower forms.

The architects noted that they have explored two different forms for the tower rooftop designs: One is a single sloped form covering each tower (see pp 28-31) and the other has opposing shed roof forms (pp 55-57). The rooftop will be designed to include a solar chimney, photovoltaic roof screen, micro-turbine, arboretum and common recreation spaces and mechanical.

The design proposes two different corner treatments for the street level, with the southern corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Stewart being open and bulbed out to create more views of and space around the Times Square building and McGraw Square. (See pp 48-53) The design proposes a retail arcade along Stewart St. The north corner street level design will hold the corner more at Virginia Street. The center of the block has a large setback from the property line to create a large plaza for the grand pedestrian entrance to hotel (or office), residential and retail users.

Page 53 shows the proposed lower terrace rooftop open space area, a space that will be highly visible from the two towers and from surrounding structures. The elevation designs for base-level appear on pages 59-63. Elevations attempt to reflect the datum lines on adjacent structures like the Times Square, Centennial and Griffin buildings.

### Departures

The applicant has identified a departure request for the height of the required Overhead Weather Protection height. In addition the proposed rooftop feature design may require an administrative conditional use permit (23,49.008.D.4) The basic Code standard allows “chimneys” to go up to 50’ more than the 500’ basic allowed height limit. The proposed micro-turbines in the fireplace flues will rise 50’ above the height limit. See pp.55-57.

### **BOARD COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS**

The Board determined that the base of the two towers would be different with more or less twin towers above with potentially different building tops. One board member complimented the applicant for a good analysis. He questioned the payback on the proposed photovoltaic (BIPV) proposed for the rooftops. The applicant clarified that the combined energy systems on the roof would produce significant amount of power even in the Seattle environment, noting the angled roofs, solar tube and turbines. A member noted that the angled facades bring glass into play with surrounding structures. She noted that the diagram on p. 25 has a very animated E-W component.

The chair noted that it is difficult to make multi-level retail space work over time, but noted the success of Seattle's Pacific Place which has a destination at the top of the atrium. Time-Warner in New York was cited as an example. This proposed retail atrium "cube" element is a very important part of a full half-block scheme. The applicant noted that the retail and business center of the hotel both open up directly onto the multi-story atrium "cube". The applicant clarified that the design proposes about 75,000 sf less than allowed by Code.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Fourteen (14) people signed in at the December 11<sup>th</sup> Early Design Guidance meeting. The following comments were provided:

-The owner of the Escala project across the alley from the proposed north tower wants to see a design with a profile that is respectful of all surrounding areas. He wants more respect shown to the Escala, citing the protocol proposed on the north side of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and Stewart project. In the future, he wants to be directly involved in the process with the developer. He is concerned about the viability of the proposed green wall on the alley façade of the north building.

-Another commented that no elevations of the Escala building were shown. He also noted that the notice for the project did not describe the review of a combined half block project. (DPD staff note: The Board had requested that both north and south towers be shown whenever the projects are presented to the Board. In addition, the EDG phase of the review is intended to show conceptual alternatives which DPD considers the half-block schemes to be.) He noted that the MUP review must address construction impacts, especially on the Escala.

-Representatives of the Hotel Workers Union questioned the tower spacing aspect and wants to see a good dialogue on the added height for the elements proposed over the height limit, such as the solar chimney tube, which may go up to + 50 more feet if approved as a conditional use. Include a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) for the development and disclose the total number of employees by type.

-The north tower needs more contextual drawings with surrounding area. Is an elevator penthouse needed?

-The twins are definitely not twins, maybe brothers, when the scheme with the office component is considered. The potential combinations of hotels, retail, residential, office uses and parking is difficult to focus on. He noted that the full half block scheme seems odd with the office component projecting into the center open notch and creating a less desirable form than the lower retail atrium form. The retail link between the towers is much clearer with better human scale. More finesse is needed on the elements between the proposed towers. The middle piece is a good organizing principle and the facades of this central element and the bases of each tower should be much simpler.

-The owner of the Griffin building across Virginia noted his structure is 4 stories height. He wants to see a lot retail uses included in the both towers, especially the north tower. He cites the Clise building low-ceilinged barber shop as an example of tucking in small scale retail. He notes that this area does come alive at night with lots of young people. About 7,000 people move up and down Virginia to and from the Market area.

-The owner of the Times Square building strongly supports the proposed multi-floor retail component. Seattle is ready for this type of retailing.

- Alternative 1A may be best for a north tower. The project needs the Avis site in order to come up with the best combination of tower and base. This is a very complex project. Anything is possible, and therefore ridiculous.

- An architect who is involved in several downtown projects advised that a double meeting slot might be appropriate for the next review. He complimented the project design team for making dramatic improvements in the design. These could be just “personal” towers...see Helmut Jahn’s twin towers in LA. He likes the opposing expressive tops, seeing them as origami like, yet needing more refinement. The tower needs to come down and anchor the 100’ tall base. The glass buildings need to be simplified, using an additional organizing principle. The proposed lower roof deck between the towers has the potential to be a really special space and place.

-Pulling the mass away from the alley in the NW corner will be good for the Escala.

-DPD should require the same “fly-around” power point presentation as they required of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and Stewart project to depict views of the towers at various levels and from surround vantage points.

-The south tower has a distinctly different set of cues to design to than the north tower.

## **PRIORITIES**

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 Downtown Development*” of highest priority to this project. Please refer to the MUP file for 3007182 and 3005575 for the complete Early Design Guidance Reports. The Reports are also available on the Design Review Web page [www.seattle.gov/designreview](http://www.seattle.gov/designreview) and clicking on the “archive”.

## **BOARD DIALOGUE AND GUIDANCE**

The Board feels that the investigation of the design is proceeding in a good way and that the level of the analysis for the north tower and the ½ block is at a good stage for Early Design review. The Chair directed the board to address the north tower in relation to the separated south tower as well as looking at both towers in the combined full half block scenario.

The Board started by reviewing major issue areas:

- The Board needs to give the applicant direction on the alternative schemes
- Connections to the base
- The proposed office use, particularly its projection into the center notch between the towers
- Rooftop expressions
- Fifth Avenue curb setback proposals
- Completeness of analysis of area structures to give cues to design of the base.
- Are there aspects of this design specific to Seattle?

Mark Hinshaw feels that Alternative 1-A (p.15) does a good job of with its symmetry. Marta likes the unsymmetrical aspect of Scheme 3 (p. 35), noting that the corner for the north tower is more cleaned up and holds the corner. The board as a whole prefers the opposing rooftop forms vs. the single circular roof form. There really are at least 3 different alternatives.

When looking at the full-half block scheme, the board's consensus is that the addition of the office component in the notch between the towers results in a very different design than the scheme with lower retail element in the notch. The office program rising between the towers represents a very unfortunate sense of misplaced bulk. The office massing scheme shown creates a lot of chaos, poking through the other functions. Any future designs should re-think this office scheme, even putting any office use within only the north tower, small floor plate not withstanding.

The board feels that the lower center element is preferred direction to pursue since it relates much better to the base of Scheme 2 but should be combined with the tower designs of Scheme 3 including the opposing roof forms. This lower center approach allows the retail element to read more prominently while, while allowing the towers to really be towers. Take away the Avis garage and put something really beautiful.

The design analysis needs to look more closely at the design character of the surrounding buildings and streetscapes in designing all four of the base facades. See pp 59-62. While the designs for all four sides of the base are showing a good direction, the scale shown on p. 62 is better than that shown on p. 59. Mark noted the need for a change in scale as the base levels go around from 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Stewart and particularly onto Virginia. The alley design concept, page 61, presents a nice balance while the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue façade has glass, glass, glass.

A lot of work needs to be done on the residential towers. Mark noted that a fly-around sketch-up presentation should be shown at the next meeting showing the development at multiple levels and one that shows the proposed nearby projects and one without them.

The Board concluded that the north and south towers should be able to proceed to the next stage of review by submitting a Master Use Permit (MUP) application. The combined half-block scheme should return to the Board for an additional EDG meeting following development of the next design iteration in response to the Board and DPD's guidance.

## **RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC GUIDELINE PRIORITIES AND FURTHER GUIDANCE**

December 11, 2007 Meeting

The guidelines below have been identified as high priority for these projects. The plain text below the guideline statements has taken the board discussion and placed it under the appropriate guideline. In addition, written comments by Bill Gilland, Board chairperson, have been synopsisized by DPD staff. A copy of Mr. Gilland's written comments and guidance is in the MUP file.

### **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. a) *Develop the architectural concept and arrange the building mass to enhance views. This includes views of the water and mountains, and noteworthy structures such as the Space Needle; b) The architecture and building mass should respond to sites having nonstandard shapes. There are several changes in the street grid alignment in Belltown, resulting in triangular sites and chamfered corners. Examples of this include: 1st, Western and Elliott between Battery and Lenora, and along Denny; c) the topography of the neighborhood lends to its unique character. Design buildings to take advantage of this condition as an opportunity, rather than a constraint. Along the streets, single entry, blank facades are discouraged. Consider providing multiple entries and windows at street level on sloping streets.***

For both the north tower alone and the combined scheme, more attention needs to be paid to the design of the base structure that picks up on the texture of the structures in the immediate neighborhood, most of which are not primarily glass facades. The design should continue to develop and express the environmental/energy systems elements of the proposed project. For the north tower alone, the Board supports the plan in Scheme 1A but with more examination needed to highlight the differences between the East and West sides of the tower. Examine desired differences that might apply in shape and glazing on the façade facing the Escala.

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

The Board supports the development of the opposing sloping roof forms shown on p. 48 which break down the scale and lead to a more dynamic silhouette

### **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. a) *Establish a harmonious transition between newer and older buildings. Compatible design should respect the scale, massing and materials of adjacent buildings and landscape. b) Complement the architectural character of an adjacent historic***

*building or area; however, imitation of historical styles is discouraged. References to period architecture should be interpreted in a contemporary manner. c) Design visually attractive buildings that add richness and variety to Belltown, including creative contemporary architectural solutions. d) Employ design strategies and incorporate architectural elements that reinforce Belltown's unique qualities. In particular, the neighborhood's best buildings tend to support an active street life.*

For the combined scheme and the north tower alone, the design for the base elevations (pp 59-62) should continue to be refined and should relate more to a more specific analysis of the architectural qualities in urban Seattle, as stated in the previous EDG report of July 31, 2007.

**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. *New high-rise and half- to full-block developments are juxtaposed with older and smaller scale buildings throughout the neighborhood. Many methods to reduce the apparent scale of new developments through contextually responsive design are identified in other guidelines (e.g., B-1: Respond to the neighborhood context and B-3: Reinforce the positive urban form & architectural attributes of the immediate area). The objective of this guideline is to discourage overly massive, bulky or unmodulated structures that are unsympathetic to the surrounding context.***

For the combined scheme and for the north tower alone, perhaps the greatest attention to the transition issue here is for the structures to relate the most to the north and south sides toward the Griffin Building and Hotel Andra and toward the Times Square building and the Centennial Building.

**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. *a. Respond to the regulating lines and rhythms of adjacent buildings that also support a street-level environment; regulating lines and rhythms include vertical and horizontal patterns as expressed by cornice lines, belt lines, doors, windows, structural bays and modulation. b. Use regulating lines to promote contextual harmony, solidify the relationship between new and old buildings, and lead the eye down the street. c. Pay attention to excellent fenestration patterns and detailing in the vicinity. The use of recessed windows that create shadow lines, and suggest solidity, is encouraged.***

For the combined scheme and for the north tower alone, Scheme 2 has a more satisfactory middle in terms of massing, with the Avis massing creating a better massing for an independent north tower. There are some positive things beginning to happen in the base design (p.21) with its central expression of the hotel functions and differentiation of masses in the facades.

As mentioned July 31, 2007, the Board expects to review a comprehensive analysis of the urban

form and architectural attributes of the area and how they contribute to the design of the structure. Buildings under construction or that have received MUP approval should also be considered.

**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.**

For the combined scheme and the north tower, this is an especially critical guideline for this very large project. The outward expression of internal functions is positive. The Board agreed that the proposed office component in Scheme 3 between the two towers seems alien to the project (pp.34, 37, 43) and contradicts the thin verticality of the towers. The base of scheme 2 appears more appropriate and clear with the 5 readable divisions along the street. (p.32)

The design should eliminate the high mass between the two towers to restore the proportions of the whole. Work to unify the base and the tower so that they are distinct but intimately related. Develop the character of the exterior so that it has some balance of solid and void and opaque and transparent and is articulated in detail to provide scale and interest and representation of the internal functions.

## **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. a) reinforce existing retail concentrations; b) vary in size, width, and depth of commercial spaces, accommodating for smaller businesses, where feasible; c) incorporate the following elements in the adjacent public realm and in open spaces around the building: unique hardscape treatments; pedestrian-scale sidewalk lighting; accent paving (especially at corners, entries and passageways) - creative landscape treatments (planting, planters, trellises, arbors); - seating, gathering spaces; - water features, inclusion of art elements; d. Building/Site Corners: Building corners are places of convergence. The following considerations help reinforce site and building corners: provide meaningful setbacks/open space, if feasible; provide seating as gathering spaces; incorporate street/pedestrian amenities in these spaces; make these spaces safe (good visibility); iconic corner identifiers to create wayfinders that draw people to the site**

*Design for uses that are accessible to the general public, open during established shopping hours, generate walk-in pedestrian clientele, and contribute to a high level of pedestrian activity. Where appropriate, consider configuring retail space to attract tenants with products or services that will “spill-out” onto the sidewalk (up to six feet where sidewalk is sufficiently wide).*

For the combined scheme the perimeter development of the project with the retail and hotel uses and the internal retail atrium provides substantial opportunity for interaction. The widened sidewalks along 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the corner cutback at 5<sup>th</sup> and Stewart also promote good pedestrian interaction. For the north tower, the ground floor plan needs to be shown. The proposed recessed balcony restaurant above Virginia (p.22)

**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.**

Much attention needs to be given to structure materiality and detailing. The building design should provide interest and new visual information as one views them from a distance and from close up. The towers especially should convey a greater sense of individuality and residential accommodation. For the north tower, the view down Virginia (p. 20) past the Escala is promising. It conveys a sense of verticality and residential use and looks as thou it is leading down to an integrated base. The close up view on page 22 is less clear and seems to much just a glass screen, with not much of a shift in scale and materiality shown.

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

Consideration of the Escala's proximity and of the architect's treatment of the alley façade is critical to the Board's review.

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

The building entries in both schemes are clearly identified and recessed sidewalk space is made for them along 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The north residential entry appears narrow and unpleasant as shown. A ground floor plan needs to be shown for an independent north tower

**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. *a) the overall architectural concept of the building (as described in Guideline B-4); b) uses occurring within the building (such as entries and retail spaces) or in the adjacent streetscape environment (such as bus stops and intersections); c) minimizing gaps in coverage; d) a drainage strategy that keeps rain water off the street-level facade and sidewalk; e) continuity with weather protection provided on nearby buildings; f) relationship to architectural features and elements on adjacent development, especially if abutting a building of historic or noteworthy character; g) the scale of the space defined by the height and depth of the weather protection; h) use of translucent or transparent covering material to maintain a pleasant sidewalk environment with plenty of natural light; and i) when opaque material is used, the illumination of light-colored undersides to increase security after dark.***

The design for combined site and the north tower seem to have continuous overhead weather protection (OHWP). The proposal to step the canopies on Stewart St. is positive (p. 62). The OHWP should be carefully designed in section and provide illumination of the sidewalk space. Articulation of the canopies should be considered as a way of marking the major entrances.

**C-6 Develop the alley facade. To increase pedestrian safety, comfort, and interest, develop portions of the alley facade in response to the unique conditions of the site or project. a) Services and utilities, while essential to urban development, should be screened or otherwise hidden from the view of the pedestrian. b. Exterior trash receptacles should be screened on three sides, with a gate on the fourth side that also screens the receptacles from view. Provide a niche to recess the receptacle. c. Screen loading docks and truck parking from public view using building massing, architectural elements and/or landscaping. d. Ensure that all utility equipment is located, sized, and designed to be as inconspicuous as possible. Consider ways to reduce the noise impacts of HVAC equipment on the alley environment. e. Pedestrian circulation is an integral part of the site layout. Where possible and feasible, provide elements, such as landscaping and special paving, that help define a pedestrian friendly environment in the alley. f. Create a comfortably scaled and thoughtfully detailed urban environment in the alley through the use of well-designed architectural forms and details, particularly at street level. Architectural concept g. In designing a well-proportioned and unified building, the alley façade should not be ignored. An alley façade should be treated with form, scale and materials similar to rest of the building to create a coherent architectural concept.**

For the combined site and the north tower, the design of the alley is very important due to the relationship across the alley to the Centennial and the Escala buildings. The proposal to include service and parking ingress and egress on the alley is very positive. The lower alley elevation (p.61) represents one of the most interesting and potentially lively facades of the project. This is due largely to the fact that the façade design is not just a large glass curtain wall. This façade needs to be closely studied in relationship to the Escala. The design proposal to incorporate alley-level planting and 5 stories of green wall in the center of the alley is a positive aspect. The green wall should be designed to grow well in alley environment and feasible maintenance methods. Show what the façade looks like behind the proposed green walls.

#### **D. Public Amenities**

**D-1 Provide Inviting and 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 principle area of the open space should be especially emphasized. As a dense, urban neighborhood, Belltown views its streets as its front porches, and its parks and private plazas and spaces as its yards and gardens. The design and location of urban open spaces on a site or adjoining sidewalk is an important determinant in a successful environment, and the type and character of the open space should be influenced by the building's uses. Mixed-use developments are encouraged to provide useable open space adjacent to retail space, such as an outdoor cafe or**

*restaurant seating, or a plaza with seating. Locate plazas intended for public use at/or near street grade to promote physical and visual connection to the street; on-site plazas may serve as a well-defined transition from the street. Take views and sun exposure into account as well. Define and contain outdoor spaces through a combination of building and landscape, and discourage oversized spaces that lack containment. The space should be well-buffered from moving cars so that users can best enjoy the space.*

*Open spaces can feature art work, street furniture, and landscaping that invite customers or enhance the building's setting. Examples of desirable features to include are: a. attractive pavers; b. pedestrian-scaled site lighting; c. retail spaces designed for uses that will comfortably "spill out" and enliven the open space; d. areas for vendors in commercial areas; e. landscaping that enhances the space and architecture; f. pedestrian-scaled signage that identifies uses and shops; and g. site furniture, art work, or amenities such as fountains, seating, and kiosks.*

*Residential buildings should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space. In addition, the following should be considered: h. courtyards that organize architectural elements while providing a common garden; I. entry enhancements such as landscaping along a common pathway; j. decks, balconies and upper level terraces; k. play areas for children; l. individual gardens; and m. location of outdoor spaces to take advantage of sunlight and views.*

Open space should certainly be provided in a project as large and intensive as this whether combined site or two independent towers. Proposed open space is shown on pp 48-53. The proposed wide sidewalks and recesses along 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue are very positive features and can provide spaces for gathering and good gestures are made to McGraw Square at the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Stewart. The Stewart Street edge will get good sunlight while the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue edge will be in shadow after noon. Elimination of the proposed block-long drop-off/curb setback zone should be seriously explored, including securing designated areas along a standard curb location for 30 minute loading areas. Regardless, the sidewalk areas should be maintained as wide as possible. as Both the combined scheme and independent north tower designs should look at providing rounded corners at the 5<sup>th</sup> and Virginia street levels, as hinted at in perspective on p. 63.

**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. *Landscape enhancement of the site may include some of the approaches or features listed below, where appropriate: a. emphasize entries with special planting in conjunction with decorative paving and/or lighting; b. use landscaping to make plazas and courtyards comfortable for human activity and social interaction; c. distinctively landscape open areas created by building modulation, such as entry courtyards; d. provide year-round greenery — drought tolerant species are encouraged to promote water conservation and reduce maintenance concerns; and e. provide opportunities*

*for installation of civic art in the landscape; designer/ artist collaborations are encouraged (e.g., Growing Vine Street).*

Strong landscape design should be provided at all relevant levels. Streetscape landscaping concepts including the alley seem quite strong. The upper level landscape design concepts for the roofscape between the towers and the residential roof terraces are less clear relative relationship to interior activities. The rooftop arboretum concept is extremely interesting.

Specific attention should be given to developing an integrated landscape plan for the whole half block even if the Avis property is not acquired.

**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. Art and History are vital to reinforcing a sense of place. Consider incorporating the following into the siting and design: a. vestiges of Belltown Heritage, such as preserving existing stone sidewalks, curbs; b. art that relates to the established or emerging theme of that area (e.g., Western, 1st, 2nd, 3rd Avenue street specific character. See “Street furniture/ furnishings” under Guideline D-3, pgs. 25-27); and c. install plaques or other features on the building that pay tribute to Belltown history.**

So far the applicant has not provided evidence of an investigation of historical resources which might contribute to creating a strong sense of place and individuality. The towers will make the site identifiable, but the design should provide more unique and memorable elements at the lower human scaled level. There is the monorail and the Westlake trolley to give cues and some of the environmental features proposed for the upper rooftop could also be more visible at street level. The “retail atrium” space should offer an opportunity to explore this together with the outside sidewalk open spaces.

**D-4 Provide Adequate 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.**

This is an important aspect of wayfinding and the quality of the pedestrian experience and should be included in future presentations.

**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, in landscaped areas, and on signage.**

For both schemes, ground level illumination as well whole building lighting characteristics should be carefully considered and presented at the next presentation. Lighting should help identify differences between public and private activity at night.

## **E Vehicular Access and Parking**

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

The Board applauded the effort to keep parking below grade. The proposed drop-off lanes on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue should be eliminated or reduced to allow greater sidewalk space. A whole block drop-off area is not desired or needed.

### **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 also applauds all underground parking and notes that this is greatly facilitated by the whole half-block scheme. The independent tower schemes conversely have a lot of difficulty in providing parking.

## **NEXT STEPS / STAFF COMMENTS**

The applicant stated that it is highly likely that they will be able to move forward with the full half-block scheme. DPD and the Board feel that another EDG meeting will be necessary due to the potential change in program which could include an office use, which raises a whole different set of design issues and questions. The applicant should work with DPD staff to secure a new project number for the whole half block scheme and then work with DPD to prepare concepts and presentation material for the next EDG meeting.

The applicant needs to respond to the design guidance in this report and provide the following:

- A more specific analysis of relationships to the neighborhood context.
- A focused statement and graphic documentation of how the next iteration of the design is successfully responding to the guidelines and guidance. Show this on plans and graphics.
- A design concept which does not build up a major mass between the two towers.
- Clear identification of materiality, color and detail in all concept representations.
- Section drawings from both directions which and continue across rights of ways and include adjacent structures including the Escala.
- Illustrate structural concepts and the impact on building form and the articulation of exterior elevations.
- Provide elevations of all four facades with drawings of adjacent structures including the Escala, 2005 Fifth Ave. building and other structures. The elevations should be rendered as they actually might appear and indicate a sense of scale and materiality.
- Show clearer indication of how the proposed building meets the sloping site along Virginia at streetscape.
- Perspectives from ground level of the whole building in context with existing buildings and the Escala and Heron Tower.

- Large scale drawings showing detailed sections and perspectives of the first few floor levels emphasizing the sidewalk experience and the detail of canopies and entrances. Also develop detailed and realistic studies of the base of the project indicating the integration of the base with the towers. Provide larger scale drawings through the OHWP and building entries.
- Continued studies of the rooftop evolution and landscape evolution and night illumination.
- Present physical samples of materials and colors being considered.
- Develop and present a physical model for roughly the 9 block area around the site with a study model of the project placed on the site.

VTL/Design Review/EDG #2 -3007128 –Dec 11, 2007