



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor  
Department of Planning and Development  
D.M. Sugimura, Director

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**THIRD EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING**  
***OF THE***  
***DESIGN REVIEW BOARD 6 DOWNTOWN***

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**Project Number:** 3007548  
**Address:** 1200 Stewart Street  
**Applicant:** Jay Reeves, Project Architect, Sclater Partners  
Douglas Scott, Owner Representative, Lexus Company LLC

**Meeting Date:** May 13, 2008  
**Report Date:** June 5, 2008

**Board Members Present:** Bill Gilland, Chair  
Matt Allert  
James Falconer  
Marta Falkowska  
Kelly Mann

**Board Members Absent:** Dana Behar

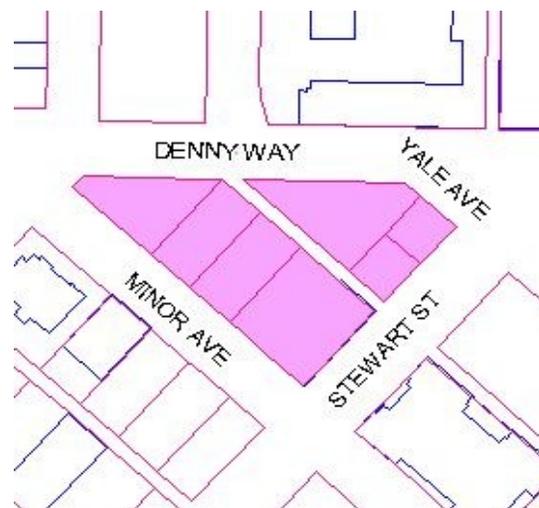
**Staff Members Present:** Bradley Wilburn, Land Use Planner

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Site Description

The development site combines seven parcels of land to establish a total land area of approximately 59,700 square feet, near the northeast edge of Downtown Seattle. The site is zoned Downtown Mixed Use Commercial with a height limited 240/2490 – 400 feet (DMC 240/290-400) and occupies an entire city block; with street frontage on Minor Avenue to the west, Denny Way to the north, Yale Avenue to the east, and Stewart Street to the south. The block is irregular in shape due to a shift in the street grid system. The subject site is also located within the Denny Triangle Urban Center Village, and Downtown Design



Guideline area. The site is not located in a designated Environmentally Critical Area (ECA).

The site is developed with three commercial buildings, surrounded by hard surface parking lot, and a vacant land at the corner of Denny and Yale Avenue. The combined development site is essentially a flat lot with a slight downward slope to the west. The abutting streets are fully developed rights-of-way with asphalt roadway; curbs, sidewalks and gutters. Denny Way (principal arterial) and Stewart Street (principal transit street) convey heavy traffic volumes past the site. An improved alley, running perpendicular to Stewart, bisects the development site. The applicants are seeking to vacate the alley to unify the development site.

### Area Development

The site is located just south of the less intensive Seattle Mixed zone across Denny way and west of Interstate Five (I-5) at the northeastern edge of Downtown. The site is within the Denny Triangle Urban Center Village (UCV) in the Denny Triangle neighborhood of Downtown. Some surrounding buildings of note include, REI's signature building within three blocks of the subject site. Immediately to the north across Denny is a one-story Greyhound bus garage built in 1940. Across Stewart to the south are the metal cladded Metropolitan Park commercial buildings. The area is in transition as more lands are being considered for, or are under construction. Surface parking lots and modest sized buildings are typical in this area.

Zoning in the area includes Seattle Mixed with a height limit of 125 feet (SM 125) to the north, Multifamily Mid-rise zone with a height limit of 60 feet (MR) east of I-5, and Downtown Mixed Commercial zone with varying heights. This area contains a mix of commercial uses that include surface parking lots, office, retail, and lodging uses. Of the residential uses in the area, apartments/condominiums dominant the uses within the upper levels of the existing structures.

### **SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL**

The owner seeks to construct two 36-story towers above an 8-story base containing both residential and commercial uses. The proposed uses include retail, physical fitness center, childcare center, office, 300-room hotel, and approximately 326 residential units. Parking for 800 vehicles will be provided below grade. An alley vacation is being requested

### **EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING**

This report is based on notes taken during the Third Early Design Guidance Meeting held on May, 13, 2008. The First Early Design Guidance Meeting was held on September 25, 2007. The Second Early Design Guidance Meeting was held on December 4, 2007. (The meeting report and design review packets can be retrieved from DPD's Design Review Web page; [www.seattle.gov/dpd/.design\\_review\\_program//project\\_review/reports](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/.design_review_program//project_review/reports), or in the MUP file at DPD.

### **ARCHITECT'S PRESENTATION**

Jack McCullough, of McCullough Hill, P.S., opened the presentation with an update on the status of the alley vacation process. Applications have submitted to SDOT requesting an alley vacation. In mid-June the design team will make a formal presentation to the Seattle Design Commission seeking guidance and conceptual approval. Paul Thoryk, lead design architect,

followed the opening statements with the primary design presentation which included a detailed response to previously established guidelines and outcomes from the Second EDG Meeting. In taking into consideration guidance from the Design Review Board in the previous EDG meetings, Mr. Thoryk provided schemes based on a two tower concept. The presentation included contextual relationship of the two towers to its surroundings including; adjacent street alignment, area topography, massing study including existing and proposed buildings, and geometry of the development site. A number of character studies depicting podium level street presence, interplay of rooftop crowns, and tower massing were presented. Under all schemes the alley would be vacated and two towers would extend above an 85 foot podium. The design objectives include: design a thoughtful building massing that takes advantage of territorial views, pedestrian street presence with connections to surrounding uses; and creation of an architectural image that would be a positive addition to the neighborhood. No design departures have been identified or requested by the design team at this time.

In response to EDG 2 Guidance focused attention was directed to the importance of the pedestrian street-level experience along all street frontages, porte-cochere, residential amenity areas, tower massing, and landscaping concept detail.

Pedestrian street-level experience: Each street front poses unique design challenges that require a measured response to what's transpiring in and adjacent to the right-of-way. The Podium level would rise approximately 85 feet above the sidewalk grade with major pedestrian "gateway" entries along Denny, Minor, and Stewart Streets. The pedestrian entries along Minor and Stewart will be shared with vehicles accessing into the porte-cochere. At street-level, pedestrians will directly experience the building's internal uses with the amount of glazing to open up a dialogue. The design proposes overhead weather protection extending beyond all entries to help frame and define human scale around the building's perimeter. Surfacing landscaping among other features are proposed to make the area more inviting.

Porte-cochere: Several photos of successful internal (vehicle and pedestrian) arrival areas were presented to help inform the assembled group of what the proposed porte-cochere would look like. Conceptual design of the proposed porte-cochere illustrated glass curtain walls that allow views through to and from Denny Way. Surface paving using color and texture creates a visually animated pattern that is intended to separate vehicles and pedestrians traffic. The internal area would be well illuminated to enliven the space and attract activity. From the site's perimeter the porte-cochere should to be visually engaging.

Residential amenity areas: Guy Michaelsen, Landscaping Consultant, presentation included a walk through of the internal and external residential amenity areas. A detailed analysis of the function and program of the residential amenity areas on top of the podium was presented per the Board's request. Approximately five areas were identified on top of the podium level; raised platforms for unobstructed views towards Lake Union and the Space Needle, sports activities areas including outdoor recreation (swimming pool) and lawn on raised platforms, seating and lounging areas for repose and passive recreation. Additionally, a stone path for contemplative walking is proposed in a green garden roof area.

Tower massing: Visually integrating the two towers above the five-story podium is critical. The towers are oriented to take full advantage of maximizing views for all units and minimize bulk impacts surrounding properties. The two towers serving different interior functions have informed sculpting the tower's external massing. As directed the two towers are different in articulation yet similar to fit within a unified design concept. The East Tower is now solidly grounded to grade, set behind a narrow landscaping strip.

Departures may be requested depending on the next design configuration.

### **BOARD CLARIFYING COMMENTS**

The Board inquired about the vision surrounding the West Tower and how it integrates into the unified design theme. Included in the applicant's response, the West Tower grows out of the podium base while the East Tower establishes a stronger grounding at the street grade. The applicant called out the function of the West Tower and detailed how it differed and was similar to the East Tower. The podium level below the West Tower featured a living green wall. The Board wanted additional information about how the green screen wall would work and how it would be maintained long-term. Mr. Michaelsen, informed the Board that the system is designed to be easily maintained for the long-term with robust vegetation. Next, the Board directed their attention to the street-level pedestrian experience around the site's perimeter. The design team confirmed they incorporated the comments from the previous EDG meeting and made the street-level more pedestrian friendly. It appeared to the Board that pedestrian oriented uses (i.e., retail, restaurants, etc.) and openings into the building's interior were too limited to obtain the desired pedestrian experience to stimulate activity. The applicant stated they would reexamine this area and they were open to increasing the amount of openings, but it would be driven by internal uses.

The development site is uniquely located and is heavily impacted by the volume of vehicles within the adjacent rights-of-way. Denny Way was portrayed as an unfriendly pedestrian street. The Board wanted to know locations of existing and proposed crosswalks to understand the nature of the pedestrian street experience. After an explanation of the pedestrian connections the Board inquired about ground floor pedestrian circulation areas. Of concern was size and layout of undefined interior spaces at ground level, as viewed from Denny and the porte-cochere. Behind the glass curtain wall, as viewed from the porte-cochere, views were obscured through the building's interior which needed additional clarification. The spatial layout of elevator shafts was partially responsible for obscuring views, as explained by the design team. The interior ground floor appeared to devote large areas to residential use, which would not help to activate the street.

The Board then next turned their attention to how the proposal establishes design compatibility to the Denny Triangle Neighborhood. Residential amenity areas, balconies, and other open space use areas were described as fitting into the neighborhood vernacular. The Board then proceeded to ask the design team to walk around the building's street perimeter to explain the canopy system. Canopies were introduced over vehicle and pedestrian entries which may cause some confusion for pedestrians within the right-of-way not used to canopies over vehicle entries. The design team chose to include canopies over vehicle entries in the canopy system to soften the building's form and help to define the space at street-level. The intent as the project moves forward is to introduce other elements to secure pedestrian safety where a conflict may occur

between vehicles and pedestrians. Lastly, the Board wanted the design team to share studies of how they arrived at the preferred option to close off the alley from the sky. The design team did not have a series of studies to share but provided an explanation of how they arrived at a different design scheme from the Second EDG meeting.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Three public members in attendance filled out the sign-in sheet. Public comments and clarifying questions focused on the following issues:

- Appreciated big entries, residential balconies, and rooftop.
- Shape of the East Tower well executed with refinement needed on West Tower.
- Street-level presence lacked commercial uses (including; restaurants, coffee shops, retail, etc.) to activate the street.
- Would love to see Denny Way established as pedestrian oriented street with shops and the like located there.

Most of the public comments are incorporated into the guidance from the Board.

## **BOARD DELIBERATIONS**

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Downtown 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 Neighborhood District*" of highest priority to this project.

The Board opened up their deliberation with identifying and commenting on a number of positive design concepts presented during the meeting before establishing specific recommendations for the project's next phase. Of note were; location parking below grade, complementary two tower design, porte-cochere, installation of an art inspired bus stop, all street frontages treated as primary points of access, strong entries, location of loading areas, quality materials, a East Tower that is solidly grounded, and quality of pedestrian experience around the site's perimeter. Additional refinement is needed with the integration of the West Tower and how it is grounded to the base, and both sculpted rooftops.

The Board felt that though Denny Way is not pedestrian friendly at the moment, this proposal should help move it in that direction. Therefore, consideration must be made to activating the streetscape including but not limited to widening the sidewalk and establishing pedestrian oriented commercial expressions at street-level. The two corners along Denny should be more reflective of the site's unique location and this opportunity should not be wasted to make the development more distinctive. The designs for the corners are focal points that should inform a sense of place. The internal ground floor space within the proposed building should move away from a shopping mall-like presence, while keeping the area adjacent to the porte-cochere with views to Denny Way visually open. Lastly, overhead weather protection needs additional

refinement and expansion over more areas of the public sidewalk; judiciously maximize overhead protection to facilitate pedestrian flow and comfort.

**Early Design Guidance:** On May 13, 2008, the Downtown Design Review Board, met for the third time to provide additional guidance statements on this project. The plain text below is from the September 25, 2007 Early Guidance meeting while the text in italics is from the December 4, 2007 Second Early Design Guidance meeting. An asterisk has been added in front of the guidelines to indicate what the Board determined to carry forward from the outcomes of the May 13, 2008 meeting.

## **A Site Planning**

### **\* 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.*

- Pay particular attention to the zoned height limit and datum line of 125 feet (SM-125) across Denny Way.
- Site should be treated as a gateway to downtown and design with this in mind.
- *Apex of triangles should be more reflective of this unique location – additional study is warranted.*

### **A-2 Enhance the Skyline**

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

- Careful attention should be directed to the roof line.
- *Sculpting the upper levels need not be symmetrical, but need to have a dialogue with each other - Several options should be developed.*
- *Explore roof tops options that play off each other, expressing a different vocabulary.*

## **B. Architectural Expression: Relating to the Neighborhood Context**

### **\* 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.*

- Be sensitive neighboring iconic buildings including the REI building.
- *Take advantage of the opportunity to design an attractive building that responds to the transit system in a neighborhood that is in transition.*

### **B-2 Create a Transition in Bulk and Scale**

*Compose the massing of the building to create a transition to the height, bulk, and scale of development in nearby less intensive zones.*

- *The two towers and their relationship to the podium and street are key design considerations moving forward to reflect sensitivity to the 125 foot zoned height limit across Denny.*

**\* 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.*

- *Symmetrically designed towers may not be the best solution. Seek to create greater dynamism between the towers.*
- *The 85 foot tall podium seems imposing and lacks humanscale for pedestrians, which will need to be resolved in the next design iteration.*

**C. The Streetscape: Creating the Pedestrian Environment**

**\* 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.*

- *Focused attention needs to be directed along all street frontages, with special attention around the porte-cochere as it relates to the pedestrian experience. More large-scale detail is warranted to convey the pedestrian experience.*

**C-3 Provide active, Not Blank, Facades**

*Buildings should not have large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks.*

**\* C-4 Reinforce Building Entries**

*To promote pedestrian comfort, safety, and orientation, reinforce the building's entry.*

- *Open up Denny frontage to engage pedestrians within the right-of-way.*

**\* 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.*

**C-6 Develop the alley façade**

*To increase pedestrian safety, comfort, and interest, develop portions of the alley facade in response to the unique conditions of the site or project.*

No specific guidance provided

**D. Public Amenities: Enhancing the Streetscape & Open Space**

**\* 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.*

***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 materials.*

- *Landscaping should be employed to mitigate traffic impacts from the busy streets. Pedestrians should be invited into protected spaces where possible.*

***\* 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.*

- *Podium level should seek to enhance the site’s identity defined by the two towers.*

***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.*

***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.*

- *Minor Avenue access to parking and service areas will need careful attention to safeguard pedestrian security.*

***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.*

- *The proposed alley-like passageway should open up to the sky.*

**Summary:** The Board agreed that the proposal could move forward, with an understanding the applicant will need to receive conceptual approval from Seattle Design Commission before the next meeting. All parties are aware that the next time the Board sees the project it may be substantially changed due in part to the alley vacation process. The Board wants the design to engage the streetscape wherever possible and scale the design to integrate itself into area at a site with four street frontages; Denny Way, Yale Avenue, Stewart Street, and Minor Avenue.

Departure from Development Standards:

The applicant did not request or identify possible departures from the Land Use Code development standards. The Board will entertain future departure requests so long as the applicants can show clear evidence of how the overall design meets these priority guidelines.

<i>Development Standard</i>	<i>Requirement</i>	<i>Proposed</i>	<i>Comment/Rational BY Architect</i>	<i>Board Recommendation</i>
<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>

Board and Staff Comments:

The architect should submit the Master Use Permit (MUP) application to DPD with the following:

- Provide detailed graphics of the pedestrian street experience, with and without landscaping. Include development of entries.
- More specific indication of the physical relationship of the project to the general and changing context, especially to higher quality architectural projects in the area.
- Present outcomes from Design Commission, SDOT, Sound Transit, and Metro Transportation meetings, and how these recommendations will shape the design proposal. Include a full indication of the status of the alley vacation possibilities.
- Provide more developed plans of all functionally different floor levels, include scale.
- Continue sections through the scheme cut in two different directions to show the spatial qualities of the base in relation to the towers.
- Continue schematic elevations (of the whole project) to give an indication of scale, articulation of facades, and materiality.
- Provide alternative studies of the base articulation of elements to seek a vocabulary which better integrates the towers with the base. Include alternative studies of the Stewart and Minor corner, plus apex at Stewart and Yale.
- Provide rendered perspectives of the whole project from ground level at different vantage points and showing context.
- Submit specific study (perspectives, etc.) of the porte-cochere space; relationship of vehicle to pedestrians, light quality, transparencies, etc.
- Include developed landscaping design on the upper levels and at grade.
- Provide studies of evening illumination and signage.
- The rooftop design should be refined and incorporate elements which respond to sustainable design wherever possible.
- Additionally, include a narrative and graphic rationale for granting any requested design departures.
- Identify and illustrate Green LEED elements, if any.

Please call Bradley Wilburn at 206.615.0508, or when you have scheduled your MUP intake appointment.