



City of Seattle

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

**FIFTH 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  
Eric Midby, Owner Representative, Lexus  
Company LLC  
**Meeting Date:** April 28, 2008  
**Report Date:** May 28, 2008  
**Board Members Present:** Bill Gilland, Chair  
Dana Behar  
Marta Falkowska  
Jan Frankina  
Brian Scott  
**Board Members Absent:** None  
**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, an one-story Greyhound bus garage built in 1940 immediately to the north across Denny, and across Stewart to the south are the two metal clad 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 (DMC) 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 dominate 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 to allow a more integrated design proposal.

### EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING

This report is based on notes taken during the fifth Early Design Guidance ("EDG") Meeting held on April 28, 2009. The first EDG Meeting was held on September 25, 2007; the second EDG meeting was held on December 4, 2007; the third EDG meeting was held on May 13, 2008, and the fourth EDG meeting was held on November 25, 2008. The meeting reports 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 the reasons why the design team elected to go before the Board one additional time prior to MUP submittal. The design team wanted to address a number concerns raised by the Board including, the number of

curb cuts along Minor, minimize pedestrian vehicle conflict near the Porte-cochere. Mr. McCullough next provided an update on significant events since the previous meeting in November. As the Board heard in the November meeting, the Design Commission conditionally approved the alley vacation public benefit package as presented, with a number of recommendations. Since the November EDG meeting with the Design Review Board, the major change to the building has been the placement of all loading facilities in the below grade parking garage. This change results in an increase of approximately 7,000 square feet of retail space at the corner of Minor and Denny, substantially improving the pedestrian experience and building design at this location.

Paul Thoryk, the lead design architect, presented changes to the building design since the last EDG in November. The entry on the Denny façade was simplified to allow a cleaner residential and hotel lobby entrance. The height of the Denny lobby through to the internal arrival area has been raised to 24 feet to allow for more light, air and movement in this location. The “podium effect” of the building was also lessened on all facades by adding different precast and glass elements, and creating “steps”—particularly with the addition of a terrace for the rooftop restaurant at the corner of Denny and Minor. The podium effect was also lessened by extending several elements of the building all the way down to the street-level, rather than having towers stuck on top of the podium. In addition, Mr. Thoryk worked to express the internal use of the building through the use of architecture and material changes. The pedestrian and vehicular entrances were better defined to locate and segregate intended pedestrian and vehicular entries through the use of canopies, landscaping, and a decorative iron grille to indicate the pedestrian entry. Finally, a study of the rooftops was completed to determine the best way to design building tops that were not identical, but related to one another. The rooftop forms are almost identical, but the east tower uses more glass elements, while the west tower uses more solid and precast elements.

Dave Reddish, the local architect, with Sclater Partners, Inc., presented information on how the design changes responded to the previous guidance. Mr. Reddish provided renderings showing how the building’s uses, podium, and hotel heights relate to the surrounding zones on both the north and south sides of Denny, which allows the building to relate to a neighborhood in transition. Mr. Reddish also provided perspectives of the building from Capitol Hill, South Lake Union, and Denny Park, as well as nighttime renderings. These perspectives illustrate how the building fits into the existing context and architectural framework of the neighborhood. In addition, Mr. Reddish addressed key green building strategies anticipated to be employed in the building program. Finally, Mr. Reddish spoke about potential departure requests that might be made at the recommendation meeting.

### **BOARD CLARIFYING COMMENTS**

The Board began their inquiry regarding the tint of the glass surrounding the Denny entryway, and whether it would be clearer than shown in the rendering. The applicant replied that it was intended to be clear structural glass. Next, the Board wanted to know whether the towers were still too similar, or whether that was an issue with the renderings. The applicant replied that it was given direction to make the towers different, but not too different. Differences in the tower are achieved through the usage of different materials, and some different patterns. A question was asked about the provision of an outdoor seating at the street-level restaurant at the corner of

Minor and Stewart, as it was not shown on any plan. The applicant responded that the goal is to have outside seating in this location, or to allow for roll-up/operable windows along this facade, but since there was no restaurant tenant secured yet, it could not be determined for sure.

The Board asked about pedestrians and vehicles sharing space in the internal arrival area and whether there would be a problem with gas and exhaust fumes. The applicant responded that it was unlikely there would be fume issues, as there are large openings at either end of the porte-cochere, and the ceiling is clear to 24 feet. The applicant also stated that exhaust would certainly be something considered in MUP application, and stated that if exhaust systems or fans were shown to be necessary, that they would be provided. The Board asked whether the pedestrian eddy along Minor was truly a pedestrian eddy, when it was so close to the ramp down to the parking garage. The applicant responded that the eddy in this location was a remnant from the previous scheme in which there was one curb cut for the at-grade loading area at Minor, one curb cut to the parking garage, and one curb cut entering the internal arrival area. The pedestrian eddy had previously been created to provide refuge for pedestrians crossing between the loading dock driveway and the parking garage driveway. Reconfiguration of the driveways as a result of sinking the loading area in the garage, and doing away with one curb cut, created a situation where the pedestrian eddy was close to the parking garage driveway. The applicant stated that this issue would be examined in the next meeting.

The Board inquired whether the circulation should be changed so that the entry to the internal arrival area came from Stewart, rather than Minor. The applicant responded that the traffic information from its traffic study indicated that re-entry into the flow of traffic onto Stewart is easier than re-entry via Minor. In closing, the Board asked how the design showed the verticality of the basketball court and the climbing wall through the architecture and building materials. The applicant responded that although the athletic club uses were preliminarily placed in this location, no athletic club tenant had signed a contract, so it was not certain at this time where these uses might be exactly located.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No members from the public elected to comment on the proposal.

## **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 its deliberation with identification of a number of positive design concepts presented during the meeting. The Board applauded the applicant for placing both the parking and the loading/service areas in the below grade garage, opening up the entire corner of Minor and Denny for pedestrian-friendly retail usage at the street level. The Board felt that the podium had been effectively broken down to respond to the context of the neighborhood, and to lessen the "podium effect." In particular, the Board liked the addition of the rooftop restaurant terrace facing west toward the Space Needle. The Board was encouraged with the increased readability

of the towers with the introduction of balconies to help differentiate residential from commercial uses on the upper level. Landscaping and Green strategy programs have been well handled, as well. The Board also commented on the fact that the pedestrian experience, in particular the pedestrian experience along Denny, had been vastly improved. Board members liked the three-dimensional aspect of the lobby on Denny—it is large enough to allow light, air, and movement, but still respects the pedestrian scale.

The Board identified several issues for discussion: 1) integration and unification of the towers and the podium and review of rooftop elements; 2) development of architectural characteristics in the context of Seattle and the urban core; and 3) the relationship of pedestrians and vehicles, and light and air in the internal arrival area.

- 1. Integration and unification of the towers and podium, and review of rooftop elements.** Overall, the Board felt this had been successfully achieved. Board members commented bringing elements of the tower all the way to the street-level critical to successfully reducing the podium effect. More articulation of the Denny façade was discussed, but Board members generally believed that that façade could be successful in drawing people to the building from the north side of Denny if designed with greater sensitivity. The Board acknowledged that Denny will likely undergo much redevelopment in the future which should be taken into consideration during the next design phase. The application of materials through layering and transparency will be vital in making the unification of the towers achievable. The solution of using similar forms with different materials on the rooftop seemed to be reasonable to the Board. Finally, the Board felt that the applicant had successfully integrated and unified the towers and the rooftop elements, which used similar designs with different material expressions.
- 2. Development of architectural characteristics in the context of Seattle and the urban core.** The Board supported the step-down of the podium at the Stewart and Minor corner for the child care play area, which helps bring the podium scale down to the context of existing buildings and zones, and the pedestrian level. The applicant is directed to continue the dialogue between use and the building's external expression. The Board asked that more glass be allowed for athletic club uses to allow more sunshine and light to enter the climbing wall and basketball court areas. The Board asked that the small square windows above the internal arrival area be strengthened or changed—a more grand announcement of the entries and exits for the internal arrival area should be provided, similar to porticos in Europe that allow for both pedestrian and vehicular use. Careful attention should be given to not celebrate the car, but to not make the entries boring. Archways or other elements should not be “pasted” above entries, but should be integrated into the overall architectural scheme.
- 3. The relationship of pedestrians and vehicles, light and air in the internal arrival area.** The Board asked that it be shown in more detail what the interior of the internal arrive area looks and feels like. Pedestrians and vehicles should be able to commingle, and the space should provide light, air, and a pleasant, relaxed place to drop off residents and guests.

**Early Design Guidance:** On April 28, 2009, the Downtown Design Review Board, met for the fifth time to provide additional guidance statements on this project. The plain text below is from the previous three Early Guidance meetings while the text in italics is from the November 25, 2008 meeting. The non-italicized text below is the downtown guidelines, and the guidance given in the previous four meetings. The italicized text is from the April 28, 2009 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.
- Greater attention should be directed towards demonstrating sustainability commitment, taking greater advantage of natural light, etc. (Provide images to illustrate components)

### **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.
- *Develop and refine relationship roof top and green roof elements to the building's architectural expression.*

## **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.
- Provide perspectives from Capitol Hill

### **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.
- Where feasible let tower come down to street-level.

**B-3 Reinforce the Positive Urban Form and 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.*

- *Seek greater sensitivity to structures to the north.*

**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.
- *Have fenestration relate to internal programs.*

**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.
- Adding pedestrian seating in the recessed areas would be an added benefit, be mindful of scale and introduction of quality materials.
- *The pedestrian experience should be developed with thoughtfulness. The eddy at the parking entrance should be examined. Outdoor café seating is encouraged for the restaurant at the corner of Stewart and Minor, and rollup windows or operable windows are encouraged to provide air and activation at this corner.*

**C-2 Design facades of many Scales**

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

- Design should focus on the human scale by delineating a hierarchy of entries that are readable from different perspectives.

***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, reinforces the building's entry.***

- Open up Denny frontage to engage pedestrians within the right-of-way.
- Entryways should be celebrated; more development of building entries should be provided for the recommendation meeting.

***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.***

- Thoughtful development is warranted to enhance street-level experience, contributing to readability.
- The Board agreed with the amount of weather protection provided by the applicant, as some breaks in the canopy help break up the podium.

***C-6 Develop the alley façade***

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

No specific guidance provided. The project has petitioned the City for vacation of the alley on the site; consideration of this petition is advancing.

**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.***

- Additional refinement surrounding the porte-cochere is warranted to visually open the pedestrian experience both from within the site and from the right-of-way.

***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.
- Day lighting the porte-cochere should be considered
- Take advantage of the site’s irregular shape, triangles help to define space.
- *The proposal had moved positively in the right direction continue along this line.*

***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 number of curb cuts has been reduced from four to three, a positive advancement.*

***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.
- Revisiting the stone wall around the service area is warranted, the pedestrian experience should be a major consideration in its design.

***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:** At the conclusion of the meeting held on April, 28, 2009, the Board agreed that the proposal could move forward to MUP application. 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 identified three (3) requests for 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>1. Overhead weather protection and lighting. 23.49.018.A</i>	<i>Continuous overhead weather protection shall be required for new development along the entire street frontage.</i>	<i>Interruptions.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Interruptions to lend greater scale and articulation to street-level experience.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>The board will consider the departure depending on seeing how the project better meets the design guidelines</i></li> </ul>
<i>2. Curb Cuts for nonresidential uses. 23.54.030.F.2.a. 3</i>	<i>In downtown zones, a maximum of two curb cuts for one-way traffic at least 40 feet apart, or one curb cut for two-way traffic is permitted.</i>	<i>One two-way curb cut and one one-way curb cut on Minor Street.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Minimizing vehicle access to the entire development site.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>The board will consider the departure depending on seeing how the project better meets the design guidelines</i></li> </ul>
<i>3. Loading berth requirement and space standards. 23.54.035.C.2.b</i>	<i>Loading berths for Low- and Medium-demand Uses shall be a minimum of thirty-five (35) feet in length.</i>	<i>Twenty-five (25) feet in length.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Limited maneuvering room due to locating all loading below grade.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>The board will consider the departure depending on seeing how the project better meets the design guidelines</i></li> </ul>

Board and Staff Comments:

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

- Provide a more detailed rendering/plan of the internal arrival area. This information should include coordination to structure. The area should provide a welcoming arrival for residents, guests, and the public. This area should draw the public in.
- Further graphic studies of the façade elements to more clearly express internal program elements.
- Further graphic studies of the major pedestrian entrances on Stewart Street and Minor Avenue to assure that they read as welcoming.
- Further graphic studies of more extensive weather protection/canopies should be examined along Stewart, at the corners of Stewart and Minor, and residential entries on Denny.
- Signage and lighting plans should be developed and provided.
- The applicant should explore outside seating at the corner of Minor and Stewart. The Board would also like to see elevations indicating operable window locations.
- The applicant should provide more detail of landscaping on top of the podium, and more detail of the residential amenity level.

The architect should include the following at the time of the Recommendation meeting:

- Essentially similar materials to that provided at the 5<sup>th</sup> EDG (4/28/2009) meeting.
- Materials samples should be provided. The applicant should bring the best examples it can find of the intended window tints for the glazed elements.
- Provide a physical study model of the project.

Please call Bradley Wilburn at 206.615.0508, (or by email [Bradley.wilburn@seattle.gov](mailto:Bradley.wilburn@seattle.gov).) when you have scheduled your MUP intake appointment.