



**FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS  
OF THE  
DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

**Project Numbers:** 3007605

**Addresses:** 2015 Second Avenue

**Applicant:** Dan Foltz, Weber Thompson Architects  
for The Justen Company

**Meeting Date:** June 24, 2008  
**Report Date:** July 21, 2008

**Board members present:** Matt Allert  
Dana Behar  
Marta Falkowska  
Bill Gilland, Chair

**Board members absent:** Jim Falconer  
Kelly Mann

**DPD staff present:** Lisa Rutzick, Land Use Planner

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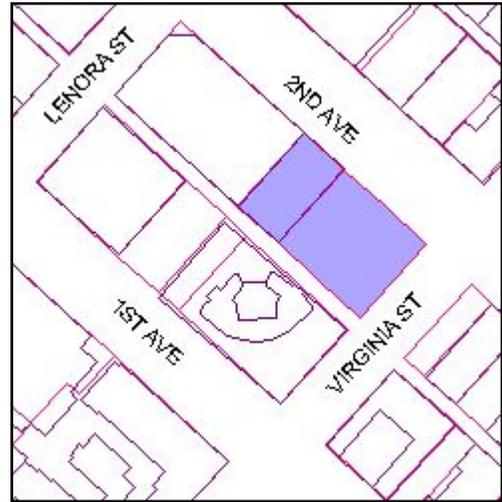
**SITE & VICINITY**

The proposed development site is located at the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Virginia Street in the Belltown neighborhood of downtown Seattle. The site is on the West side of 2<sup>nd</sup>, on the quarter block north of Virginia and contains a surface parking lot. Second Avenue is a Class 1 pedestrian corridor and principal transit street, while Virginia is a Class 2 pedestrian street and minor arterial. No Green Street or View Corridor designations exist for this project.

The site is zoned DMC 240/290-400. The height limit for this zone is 240 feet, however if a residential tower is proposed that participates in the creation or funding of low income house under SMC 23.49.015, and if the building is designed and built to at least a silver LEED level, it is eligible for up to 400 feet in height. An additional 40 feet, or 10% of the maximum height limit, is available for screened rooftop mechanical equipment.

The site is 0' long in the north/ south direction and 108' in the east/ west direction. The alley is currently 16' feet wide, making it substandard, requiring a setback on the alley of two feet to a minimum height of 26' above the alley. The sidewalks on Second Avenue and Virginia Street meet the minimum code dimensional requirements.

The site to the north is occupied by a 240' residential tower (Cristalla) and to the west is another 240' residential tower One Pacific Tower (OPT)



### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed development at 2015 Second Avenue is for a 39 story, 234 unit residential tower with 7,500 sq. ft. of retail commercial use at ground level. Parking for 336 vehicles will be located both below and above grade.

**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE: OCTOBER 9, 2007**

### **DESIGN PRESENTATION**

A joint site review for both the subject site and the proposed tower to on the southwest corner of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and Virginia intersection was provided through the presentation of graphics, photos and computer modeling showing the allowed zoning envelope for the project and massing of in relationship to the surrounding built environment. The presentation materials included three separate concepts for each project, including massing diagrams, location of parking, pedestrian and vehicular access and possible departures. However, the options were paired so that Option 1 north was coupled with Option 1 South. No specifics concerning materials were provided due to the early stage of design development and the overall purpose of this meeting.

The program of the south site included a residential lobby along Virginia Street, a hotel entrance on Second Avenue and ground level retail uses. Five floors of below grade parking and three floors of above grade parking limited to the south half of the site in order to maximize hotel use along Virginia were presented. The program incorporates a corner retail space at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Virginia, along with potential sidewalk widening along 2nd Avenue. Access is proposed from the alley. Currently the proposal does not anticipate any existing buildings or portions of existing buildings will be reused on site.

The program of the north site included a residential lobby along 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue with four floors of below grade parking and four floors of above grade parking. Access is proposed from the alley. The program incorporated a corner retail space at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Virginia. All of the schemes proposed a base that is eroded at the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Virginia to include space for the retail entry and possible spillover of commercial activity. For the south tower options, the base steps back to relate to adjacent datum lines and reinforce the hotel program, while also creating landscaped

terraces. For all of the north tower alternatives, the base relates to the adjacent architectural datum line established by Cristalla's base.

The first scheme (Option 1S) for the south site showed a rectilinear base with a tower that uses angled and fractured rectilinear forms compositionally to break down the tower massing and create long slenderizing lines on the façade. A distinctive, faceted vertical bar rises from the corner at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Virginia along Virginia St. which works with a similar bar on the north tower. The tower is approximately 57 feet from 1915 Second Avenue to the south

The first scheme (Option 1N) for the north site showed a rectilinear base with a tower that uses angled and fractured rectilinear forms compositionally to break down the tower massing and create long slenderizing lines on the façade. The Base element on Virginia is expressed at 2<sup>nd</sup>. A distinctive, faceted vertical bar hovers above the base and rises from the corner at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Virginia along 2nd which works with a similar bar on the south tower. The tower holds back from Virginia property line as a neighborly gesture, but aggressively holds the alley property line for a significant length of the west façade. The tower is approximately 77 feet from the Cristalla to the north and 16 feet from OPT's property line.

The second scheme (Option 2S) for the south site showed a rectilinear base with a tower that uses a base with a tower that mixes curved and angled rectilinear forms compositionally to break down the tower massing and create long slenderizing lines on the façade. A distinctive, faceted vertical bar rises from the corner at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Virginia along Virginia St. which works with a similar bar on the north tower. The tower's south façade is faceted to capture views while providing more relief to 1915 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. The tower is approximately 49 feet from 1915 Second Avenue to the south

The second scheme (Option 2N) for the north site showed a rectilinear base with a tower that mixes curved and angled rectilinear forms compositionally to break down the tower massing and create long slenderizing lines on the façade. A distinctive, faceted vertical bar rises from the corner at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Virginia along 2nd. which works with a similar bar on the south tower. The tower angles back from the Virginia property line, but aggressively holds the alley property line for a moderate length of the west façade. The tower is approximately 72 feet from the Cristalla to the north and 16 feet from OPT's property line.

The third and preferred scheme (Option 3S) for the south site showed a rectilinear base with a tower that mixes slightly curved and angled rectilinear forms compositionally to break down the tower massing and create long slenderizing lines on the façade. The tower's south façade is faceted to capture views while providing more relief to 1915 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. The tower is expressed at the corner. The tower is approximately 61 feet from 1915 Second Avenue to the south

The third and preferred scheme (Option 3N) for the north site showed a rectilinear base with a tower that mixes slightly curved and angled rectilinear forms compositionally to break down the tower massing and create long slenderizing lines on the façade. The tower angles back from alley property line touching the west property line at only one point, but approaches the Virginia property line at points on the south façade. The tower is expressed at the corner. The tower is approximately 71 feet from the Cristalla to the north and 16 feet from OPT's property line.

A conceptual plan for the right-of-way improvements along both Second Avenue and Virginia Street included widened sidewalks, open space at the entry points, special paving, landscaping, curb bulbs at the corners and alley intersections, street trees, seating and overhead weather protection.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Approximately 42 members of the public attended the Early Design Guidance meeting. Several additional comment letters were received. The following comments were offered:

- Concerned with the overwhelming impact of the canyon effect created by locating both towers close to Virginia.
- The design should be responsive to the historical buildings near to the sites. As proposed, the designs do not appear to recognize this aspect of the context in a significant way. The carving back of the proposed towers seems random.
- While the south side of the south tower has been narrowed, it appears to slam into the north façade of the approved 1915 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue building. The north façade of the 1915 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue building is primarily solid due to the proximity to the property line and the inability to secure an easement over the abutting property (the south tower). This design of this north façade may be revisited as a result of this proposed development.
- Wondering why the hotel use is proposed for the south tower and not the north tower.
- Neighbors appreciate outreach efforts of the design and development team.
- Strongly concerned that the 80' tower spacing requirement does not apply to the site. That the Code reduced the tower spacing to zero in this circumstance is indicative of a defective code. As a result, these projects should seek to limit the damage created by the problematic code.
- Important guidelines to consider are A1, B1, B2 and B3 which address reduction of the bulk and scale impacts and being sensitive to the three historic buildings in the immediate vicinity.
- Views of the project from neighboring units should be provided in future presentations. Shifting the north tower further to the north would preserve many views to the southeast.
- The neighborhood context has been built keeping view corridors down the east west streets in mind. This objective should be continued in these projects.
- Commend the alley improvements made along with the neighboring Cristalla development, which widened the alley, included lighting and provided space to have a dumpster-free alley.
- Concerned with the wind at these corners due to the hill in conjunction with the height and closeness of the towers.
- Additional graphics showing the proposed building footprints in context would be helpful.
- The 18' distance between the proposed north tower and the OPT building is very compact.
- The Terminal Sales Annex, located on the site, is an important building that represents an architectural style that is relatively rare in Seattle.
- The two towers represent significant impacts, particularly with regard to bulk and scale as viewed from certain vantage points. The unprecedented height of both buildings is difficult to comprehend. Therefore, increased separation between the two towers is critical.
- Residents of the Cristalla are concerned about the loss of light due to the proposed structure.
- Want to see more examination of the light and shadow impacts on the streets and nearby residential units.

- The safety of hotel workers is affected by building design. Therefore, the design of the hotel units should consider how the design may be improved to prevent unnecessary worker injury. The Unite Here Union is available for consultation on the design of the hotel units.
- Request to be listed as a Party of Record.
- Objections to the proposed building height.
- Request graphic studies of the site and context showing figure grounds, open spaces, shadows, zoning allowances and photos towards the site from neighboring buildings.

<b>SECOND EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE:</b>	<b>NOVEMBER 27, 2007</b>
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### **DESIGN PRESENTATION**

At the second EDG meeting, extensive site review for both tower sites was provided through the presentation of graphics, photos and computer modeling exploring architectural relationships to adjacent structures, street context including across 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, massing in relationship to the surrounding built environment, and architectural responses to the previous EDG meeting direction in relation to adjacent structures.

The major ramifications and opportunities stemming from 15 iterations of tower placement combinations and scenarios were presented and discussed, with 2 acceptable alternatives identified. Also, the preferred design direction for tower shaping was discussed, and explained relating to the positives and negatives of each move affecting adjacent structures.

The towers were presented separately with the south tower first and the north tower second. The presentation materials built on the preferred alternative identified in the first EDG for each project, with modifications to address key issues of bulk, light and air relationships to adjacent structures. Three base studies were presented exploring a range of ideas more than presenting definitive options. No specifics concerning building materials were provided due to the early stage of design development and the overall purpose of this meeting. Landscape was deferred to a later meeting per the direction of the Board in the first EDG.

All of the options had similar assumptions regarding the proposed building programs as was presented at the previous EDG meeting.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Approximately 11 members of the public attended the Second Early Design Guidance meeting. An additional comment letter was also received. The following comments were offered:

- Compliments to the applicant for responding so thoroughly to the EDG comments. Despite a defective city code with regard to tower spacing, the proposed schemes are extraordinarily sensitive to the neighbors. Would like to see a figure ground study of how the spaces are shaped to show views to the west.
- Appreciates the response by the design team to address neighbor's concerns with results that are both positive and creative. Feels that the two towers are spaced too closely across Virginia (76') and would encourage the south building to round off the sharp corners to increase this distance. Prefers rounded edges, rather than corners. Five residential floors of OPT face the alley and proposed alley façade of the north building. The design of this west elevation is therefore critical. The garage exhaust should not be dumped into the alley and

these residential units. Encourage the developer to reach across 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and contact the property owners (Moore, Catholic Archdiocese, Josephinum) to look for opportunities to improve the east side of the street. Interested to see the materials, colors, streetscape treatment, as well as environmental studies associated with the proposed developments.

- Found this to be an excellent urban design analysis and supports the proposed tower placement locations. At the podium level is where the human scale is affected most. As such, the podium design must offer a substantial form that grounds the towers; the base should not look applied. And within the substantial base, the form should further break down to favor the pedestrian scale. Encourage the design to work for simpler, calmer, more consistent approach to the podium designs that complement (not compete with) neighboring buildings.
- The architectural expression of the two buildings should reflect the different sites and programs. Two similarly executed buildings will exacerbate the height, bulk and scale impacts. These should be treated as two different buildings that look like they were developed independently. Supports the proposed departure request given the public improvements proposed at the ground level.
- The alley raises a security issue with a blank façade offering no activity or views to the alley. Would like to see details of how the alley will be designed in terms of lighting, active uses, increased width, stairwell design and dumpster accommodation. Uses at the sidewalk level should offer multiple storefronts with generous and active pedestrian spaces, especially at the alley corners. The tower spacing and location of the south building appears well considered. The north building, however, should eliminate the bulge at the southeast corner towards the Cristalla. Such a projection is not respectful of the Cristalla residences. The Cristalla has a 23<sup>rd</sup> floor roof deck and common open space which should the design should be sensitive towards. The building footprint has become wider from east to west and would encourage a return to the previous small tower footprint. The maximum tower footprint is not guaranteed by the Code. Not concerned with the wind issues if the design is responsive to the studies.
- Agree that the bulge towards the Cristalla is detrimental. The towers look too unrelieved and monolithic without significant changes between them.
- This section of Second Ave feels uncomfortable for the pedestrian and needs to have more outdoor restaurant seating to activate the streetscape.
- Need to make the tower design friendly given the numbers of neighbors who will be viewing the buildings.
- The design has generally been responsive to the comments from the first EDG. The northeast corner of the south tower should be rounded off to soften the appearance and increase the distance between the towers. The alley design of the north building should be enhanced adjacent to OPT residential floors. Specifically, blank walls should be eliminated and special design enhancements should be included. Additionally, building venting and other noise generators should not be included along this façade.

<b>RECOMMENDATION MEETING:          JUNE 24, 2008</b>
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### **DESIGN PRESENTATION**

At the Recommendation meeting, several modifications to the design were presented to the Board, including:

- Pushing the projecting corner at the SE corner five feet to the north; this shift resulted in minor massing changes.
- The building design has evolved with a distinct character from the South Tower proposal.
- The design endeavors to create distinct tower and base elements, but with overlapping, weaving strategy to link the two and emphasize the main entry.
- Datums from Cristalla and OPT are used to help define the base.
- The base along Virginia has evolved to eliminate exposed parking; the entire façade is at the above-grade parking levels lined with work studios and residential uses.
- The entry to the alley from Virginia is intentionally held back to allow an outdoor café or retail space.
- Stepped overhead canopies are maintained
- Added emphasis is given to the residential entry, and minor emphasis is given to the retail entries.
- Specific attention is given to the design of the alley. The alley design resembles the framework of the base at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Virginia Facades. Lighting design was included to make the alley a safe and pleasing. The design includes active uses and a design emphasizing breaking down the scale of the alley façade, identifying different uses and adding visual interest with varying glass treatments.
- The project team has engaged the local community in a discussion about improving the landscaping and identifying opportunities along the immediate 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue streetscape, including both sides of the street. While the 2015 project does not propose providing design or implementation for these changes, they are an active member of these discussions.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Approximately ten members of the public attended the Recommendation meeting; the following comments were offered:

- Concerned that the distance between the proposed tower base and the residential units of the OPT building are too close.
- Confirmation that discussion between the developer and the community regarding a broader landscape plans for the streetscape have occurred. Not pleased that the proposed building will be only 20 feet away due to reckless code allowances. The alley façade at levels 6-8 are directly opposite from units at the OPT. The average distance between the OPT and the proposed tower is 36 feet; the west façade should be less intrusive to OPT. Applaud efforts to design an interesting façade along the alley and appreciate the sculpting of the tower. Consideration of this tower needs to be viewed in the broader context with the other towers that are being proposed in the near vicinity.
- A Cristalla representative appreciates the willingness of the developer to work together with the Cristalla residents. Efforts should be made to shape the tower living spaces so that they do not have units directly facing each other and privacy can be maintained.
- Support the design showing how the tower extends directly to the street in certain location.

- The residential amenity open spaces should be designed to be sensitive to the residents to the north.

## **DESIGN GUIDELINE 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 following siting and design guidance and identified by letter and number those siting and design guidelines found in the City of Seattle's *Design Review Guidelines for Downtown Development* of highest priority to this project.

### **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.**

*Belltown-specific supplemental guidance: (a) Develop the architectural concept and arrange the building mass to enhance views. This includes views of the water and mountains, and noteworthy structures; (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; and (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.*

The Board discussed at length the spacing of the towers on each of the sites. The Board felt that the two schemes presented did not reflect the possible range of alternatives for tower spacing. The Board agreed they would like to see additional alternatives that explore the towers being located towards the center of their respective sites, rather than at the edges. At the next meeting, the Board would like to see greater exploration of the siting of the towers on the base.

The Board also raised concerns with the canyon effect of having both towers situated against Virginia Street. They suggested that a wind tunnel analysis be completed to better understand the impacts of wind on the pedestrian realm.

**At the Second Early Design Guidance meeting, a detailed study of tower spacing was presented exploring the balance between the two towers and their relationship to each other and nearby buildings. Intervals of 0', 5', 10', 15', 20' and 30' setbacks for each building were shown.**

**In the preferred scenario, the tower of the south site was moved eight feet from the north property line. The applicant explained that greater than eight feet would necessitate full plate parking which was undesirable as it creates frontage of the**

parking use along Virginia. The Board agreed that screening this façade with active hotel uses is preferable. The top of the tower was modified to step away from Virginia Street, down to adjacent structures and the massing was modified to step down to adjacent structures including OPT. The Board confirmed that the shifting of the tower by eight feet seemed a reasonable and realistic resolution.

On the north site, the building core was shifted ten feet to the north. The tower was reshaped to angle away from OPT reducing the bulk and proximity of the two towers to each other and opening up OPT to more light and air. Responding to the reshaping along the south and west facades, additional massing was added to the north façade. This mass was also reshaped to angle away from Cristalla, reducing the profile and proximity of the tower to Cristalla and allowing for greater light and air. The Board agreed that the sculpted curves of the north building provides a sensitive response to the OPT and Cristalla residents. They also felt that the additional bulge is acceptable given the balance achieved by all five towers considered together. The Board noted that perhaps the pointed edge at the southeast corner could be further setback.

The Board noted that the while the shaping of the north tower has been revised and the south tower has shifted to the south, as seen from a distance, the beveled condition of the north tower will not be evident – only the edges will be apparent – thus making the bulk seem greater.

An analysis of the building typologies in the immediate vicinity was presented showing patterns of frames, structural rhythm, taller datum lines, terra cotta detailing, masonry and concrete materials that can help inform the design of the two proposed buildings. The Board strongly agreed that the design of the two buildings should steer away from concepts or designs that are similar to each other. The two towers will appear as a pair from and that alone is a sufficient commonality. The Board encouraged different building profiles that will read from a distance.

The applicants noted that a wind study is underway for the two sites and the preliminary results agree that shifting the towers away from each other and projecting the podiums outward is helpful in reducing adverse wind conditions.

The Board was pleased with the extensive studies responding to the EDG, particularly with tower spacing and shape.

*At the Recommendation meeting, the Board expressed support for the tower massing and relationship to the nearby towers to the north and west.*

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

The Board recognized that the proposed towers will be highly visible against the existing downtown skyline, especially given the grade at this intersection and the increased height limits. These two towers are proposed in such close proximity to each other and they will

both reach a height not yet experienced in Belltown. The Board cautioned against treating these towers as twins; rather they should be designed as distinctive buildings in their own right. The also mentioned they would like to see greater contextual analysis that extends far enough to show other towers (existing and in proposed) in the vicinity. The Board also would like to see *fly-bys* of the site and vicinity that show what the permitted zoning would allow in the area. As well as the view provided from the water of the downtown skyline, the Board was interested in the view of the proposed structures from West Seattle and Victor Steinbrueck Park. The roofscape designs will be important considerations as the building forms develop.

**At the Second EDG meeting, the Board agreed that the tower placement has sufficiently responded to the context and allowed prominent views down Virginia towards the water.**

*At the Recommendation meeting, the Board found the design to be both graceful and tall - a celebration of the building height. The Board also liked the design resolution of the top of the building. The Board praised how the twisting form of the tower as it moves upward is reinforced by the shifts in colors and materials that remain within the same vocabulary.*

## **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.**

*Belltown-specific supplemental guidance: (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; and (d) Employ design strategies and incorporate architectural elements that reinforce Belltown's unique qualities. In particular, the neighborhood's best buildings tend to support active street life.*

The Board would like to see consideration of the buildings across Second Avenue in the design development of the two buildings. The Board sees the built context to the east as more influential on these two sites, than the context to the west. The rich historical context of the area, especially the Moore Theatre and Josephinum buildings, should help inform the design. The Board struggled with the severe streetscape along the east side of Second Avenue in contrast with the lush streetscape improvements proposed and existing along the west side of Second Avenue. The two corners on the west side should endeavor to relate to the east side and bridge this gap.

The Board noted that they are waiting to learn about the landmark potential of the Terminal Sales Annex building and are not weighing in the landmark review or status.

The Board suggested that photos of the proposed towers from neighboring residences would be useful in understanding the view, light, shadow and bulk impacts. *Staff Note: While such an analysis will be helpful in understanding the light, shadow and bulk impacts resulting from the proposed structures, it is not appropriate to assess this from private nearby residences, since the City does not have the authority to preserve or protect views from private property (SMC 25.05.675.P). Instead, staff has recommended that the architects prepare fly-by analyses (similar to that shown at the EDG) from lower elevations in order to capture a better understanding of the bulk, scale, light and shadow impacts as experienced from the pedestrian perspective, as well as from the broader environment. This understanding and response to patterns of urban form found nearby should inform the composition and massing of the proposed structures. Efforts should be made to enhance view opportunities from and around the proposed towers.*

**At the Second EDG meeting, the Board discussed the emerging forms of the two tower designs. The south building has more regularity, while the north building is responding to multiple conditions, thus the result is a somewhat tortured form. The Board recommended shaving back the point at the southeast corner back by five feet to see whether this change results in a better relationship between the buildings and between the tower and the podium.**

**The Board was satisfied that the explorations of distances between the two buildings were well analyzed and they agreed with the preferred option.**

**The Board also noted at the datum lines established by the Cristalla and 1218 Second Avenue should endeavor to be reflected in the design as a series of buildings. For both buildings, the Board would like to see more integration of the base design into the tower. The Board looks forward to reviewing three-dimensional images of the podium and tower designs and how they relate.**

See A-1.

*At the Recommendation meeting, the Board was pleased with how the datum lines from the podiums of the OPT and Cristalla buildings informed the base of the proposed structure. They agreed that the proportions of the base height relate well to the abutting buildings. They also were supportive of the setback along 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue that allows for a wider sidewalk environment, similar to the area in front of the Cristalla. The Board discussed base and tower integration and agreed that the contrast between the light frame of the base and the dark tone of the tower glass should be less stark. The Board recommended darkening the color of the base frame to a tone that is between the medium shade shown in the packet (pages 48-49) and the lighter shade proposed.*

*The Board felt that where the base frame merges with the curvature of the tower to capture the entry appeared unresolved and could be further studied to create a more dramatic sense of entry. The Board suggested that perhaps this could be achieved*

*through a canopy detail. The Board was very pleased with the five foot setback from Virginia to create a more slender profile.*

- 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 neighboring or nearby less-intensive zones.**

The Board discussed the shape of the proposed towers and would like to see how various iterations of the building form would affect the pedestrian realm in terms of light and shadow impacts, as well as views down Second Avenue and Virginia Street. The Board encouraged consideration of the neighbors by softening the impacts to nearby residences through sculpting the building form. See also B-1.

The Board agreed that the design of the two buildings should be approached as separate structures and not as related twins. The close proximity and height of the two buildings will automatically create a common vocabulary.

See A-1.

*At the Recommendation meeting, the Board was very pleased with the tower massing and how it relates to OPT and Cristalla.*

- 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.**

*Belltown-specific supplemental guidance: (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; and (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.*

- 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.**

At the EDG meeting, this was not addressed in detail by the Board.

**At the Second Early Design Guidance meeting, three conceptual design options for each building base were presented. For the south building, Option 1 included a solid, grand frame that articulates and accentuates the entry to the hotel along 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Material accents in the frame reappear as columnar elements along the**

retail portion of the façade, supporting a trellis or wing feature framing the hotel terrace at level 5. The parking is treated with translucent channel glass, mixed with accent panels. The ground level retail and work studios are glazed with vision glass. The hotel is treated as a frame of punched windows with dominant verticals, recalling some elements of the neighboring Terminal Sales Building. Some of the solid horizontals are visually broken (spandrel glass) allowing some “punches” to become elongated vertically creating a pleasantly random window pattern. This treatment alludes to some of the features of the TSB, but is decidedly contemporary in its treatment. The tower anchors itself at the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Virginia, where the building is pulled back to provide extra area for sidewalk activation and utilization by the retail.

Option 2 for the base of the south building showed a stout frame element that articulates and accentuates the entry to the hotel along 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and is repeated at in the bay structure of the retail frontage. The parking is treated with translucent or colored glass in a random mullion pattern. The ground level retail and work studios are glazed with vision glass. The hotel is treated as a frame of punched windows with dominant horizontals, recalling some elements of the neighboring Terminal Sales Building (TSB). Some of the solid verticals are visually broken (spandrel glass) allowing some “punches” to become elongated vertically creating a pleasantly random window pattern. This treatment alludes to some of the features of the Terminal Sales Building, but is more contemporary. The tower anchors itself at the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Virginia, where the building is pulled back to provide extra area for sidewalk activation and utilization by the retail.

Option 3 for the base of the south building was a series of exposed decks that accentuate the hotel elevator lobbies and entrance, which is further defined by a grand canopy. The hotel and parking are treated with a similar, consistent frame of punched windows. Bays of colored glass overlay the grid, so that it is masking the grid behind. This treatment alludes to some of the features of the TSB, but is more contemporary in its treatment. The tower anchors itself at the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Virginia, where the building is pulled back to provide extra area for sidewalk activation and utilization by the retail.

Option 1 for the base of the north building allows the tower to simultaneously hover above and meets the ground plane as layers of the façade are expressed at different levels. Solid and void are expressed as a study of program, with more solid elements occurring where parking would otherwise be visible and voids occurring where work studios and retail occurs. A layered façade is imagined to provide horizontal shading elements that further break down the façade and provide functional shading for the work studios. Spandrel and translucent glazing also provide a mechanism to break down the “solid” portions of the façade, specifically at night.

Option 2 for the base of the north building also allows the tower to simultaneously hover above and meets the ground plane as layers of the façade are expressed at different levels. Solid façade elements are wrapped in lighter “framing elements”, accentuating and expressing the solid vs. the void. Solid elements are composed with

deep reveals, overlapping the curved tower elements, expressing the residential entry. Punched openings articulate the locations of work studios and help break down the façade.

Option 3 for the base of the north building again allows the tower to simultaneously hover above and meet the ground plane as layers of the façade are expressed at different levels. A major bay structure is superimposed with framed elements, exposed columns and horizontal fins defining the base. The framed elements define parking bays, building entries, and work studios. The glazing within each bay responds to program. Spandrel, translucent or art / colored glass at parking, and glass accentuating the entry as well were shown.

The Board agreed that the strong commercial appearance and uses at the ground level is critical. The Board looks forward to reviewing conceptual ideas of how the designs will weave together the tower and podium designs. The Board felt unclear as to the factors driving the different base designs. Generally, the Board agreed that the architectural expression of the various base designs were too busy. The podium should respond to the scale and datum lines of the neighboring buildings.

*At the Recommendation meeting, the Board discussed at length the tower design and materiality. The tower was shown with three colors of glass to define different masses in the tower and reflect reaction to sun exposure. The colors included a light blue / clear, bronze, and dark grey glass. The spandrels were light blue green, mint green, and dark grey. Additionally, metal panel horizontal spandrels were located at every third floor in the bronze glass areas. On the east façade and portions of the south, north and west facades include 18” square translucent white glass squares staggered from floor to floor to create subtle diagonal expression across the façade. A vertical accent signifies the entrance of the residential portion of the building and creates a horizontal eye break above the highest residential floor. The Board recommended approval of the proposed tower design and the faceting of the mass to create movement. They also appreciated the frosted glass elements and patterning of the diagonal accents to reinforce this movement. The Board did note that the base of the alley façade does not meld into the tower above as well as the other facades. The Board recommended further exploration of how this might be better achieved. The Board also questioned whether the tower design was too office-like in character and that added expression of the individual residential units would create a more residential appearance. The Board recommended that the uses contained within the base frame (work studios and townhouse style units) should be expressed differently from the residential units above the frame element. The Board would like this to be explored in a subtle manner without compromising the verticality of the tower. Finally, the Board expressed a preference for a slightly less dark colored glass for the tower.*

*The Board expressed a preference for the vertical accent band that was shown as the preferred option (shown on page 40 of the packet).*

## 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, and open to the public.

*Belltown-specific supplemental guidance: Sidewalks should (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 the adjacent public realm and in open spaces around the building: unique hardscapes, pedestrian-scale sidewalk lighting, accent paving, seating, water features, art and landscape elements; and (d) Building corners are places of convergence.*

The Board noted that this guideline will be a critical consideration for future reviews and that the details of the pedestrian level.

*At the Recommendation meeting, the Board was very enthusiastic with the south elevation and how the base has been designed to screen the parking with townhouse-style units that will lend greater animation to the streetscape. Along the Virginia Street base façade, the portions of the tower are expressed to the ground at the corner, creating a tall, slender façade. The base continues the language of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue’s base, but now expresses work studios and two-story townhouse units, concealing the parking behind. Decks occur at the townhouse units and corner work studios. Furthermore, an outdoor café / retail terrace is located at the alley off of Virginia. The Board was very pleased with the introduction of the townhouse like units to help screen the parking, as well as the activation of the street level. The Board was also supportive of how the street level uses have been programmed to create an activated streetscape.*

*The Second Avenue base façade also has portions of the tower that are expressed to the ground at the corner. The base is articulated with a filigreed framework. The articulation of bays and double verticals of the frame and columns respond to the historic façade bays and pilasters of the Cristalla. Part of the frame engages the tower and part flies free allowing the tower façade to slip independently behind. The upper levels containing parking are concealed by a layered scrim and light boxes. The light boxes illuminate transparent glass, random mix of white and amber colors set within the boxes. A scrim of steel frame and clear and “bubbled” channel glass further obscures the light source to provide a varying luminescence across the scrim. The Board was unanimously in favor of the proposed screening of the parking and loved the combination of active uses and the scrim element to screen the parking. They agreed that the proposed solution was both creative and interesting. The Board was supportive of the elimination of the light box detail along the alley so that neighbors are not disrupted. Instead, only opaque glass will be used in the scrim feature. The Board also noted that the recessed notch where the tower extended directly to the ground without interruption was a dramatic and interesting detail (shown on page 16).*

**C-4 Reinforce Building Entries. To promote pedestrian comfort, safety and orientation, reinforce the building entrance.**

**This priority guideline was added at the Second EDG meeting.**

**At the Recommendation meeting, the Board recommended that the residential entrance could be strengthened to be more apparent.**

**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.**

*Belltown-specific supplemental guidance: Overhead weather protection is an important design consideration in Belltown to provide human scaled proportions and pedestrian comfort in the public realm. Pedestrian activity and pedestrian oriented uses are facilitated when weather protection is provided adjacent to the public sidewalk.*

The Board noted a desire for continuous overhead weather protection along the street facing facades.

**At the Second EDG, the Board noted a preference for stepped canopies to help reinforce the entries and uses.**

**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.**

The Board felt that the mid-block curb bulbs shown for both sites at the alley was an excellent concept and that the building treatment should wrap around the corners to the alley facades. The Board encouraged rich, human-scaled materials, lighting and landscaping to be considered at the bulbs and alley. The configuration of ground level uses at the northwest corner of the south tower especially lends itself to activating and wrapping the corner. The Board also encouraged taking cues from the successful ally treatment established by the Crystalla building in terms of dumpsters and lighting.

**At the Second EDG meeting, the Board agreed that the design of the alley façade is critical both from a safety standpoint, but also because several residential floors of OPT will face the proposed podium. The lighting and nighttime illumination plan for the alley is important. The Board reiterated support for having active uses and views of the alley from the proposed buildings, as well as developing the alley corners with curb bulbs, creating mini plaza spaces that are landscaped and extend into the alleyways.**

*At the Recommendation meeting, the Board was pleased that a storage area for trash and recycle bins currently located in the alley has been provided within the building with access from the alley. The Board felt that the alley base façade was well-proportioned and designed. The Board appreciated the presence of the townhouse style units as a way to break down the massing and conceal the parking along a portion of*

*the alley base façade. The Board noted, however, that the parking/storage area that is exposed on the upper floors along the alley could be better buffered from views from the nearby residential neighbors. The Board recommended inclusion of landscaping at the seventh floor terrace that will spillover onto the alley façade to soften and screen this portion of the façade.*

## **D. Public Amenities**

- D-1 Provide Inviting and Usable Open Space.** Design public open spaces to be visually pleasing, safe and active environment for residents, workers and pedestrians. Views are solar access to the principal are of the open space should be especially emphasized.

This priority guideline was added at the Second EDG meeting. The Board noted string support for the concept of curb bulbs at the alley corners and using this opportunity to provide vegetation and streetscape enhancements.

*At the Recommendation meeting, the Board expressed strong support for the pedestrian experience created by the base design of this building. They liked how the base design also wraps into the alley and the presence of the two story townhouse units and decks will contribute vibrancy to this corner of the development along the street.*

*The Board was very pleased with the entry plaza space at the corner, as well as the inviting commercial spillover area at the alley corner. The Board would like further study of this corner retail space to include multiple entries to the corner open space, similar in concept to the entry area of the Peet's Coffee in Fremont.*

*The Board expressed clear unanimous support for the curb bulb at the alley and believes this to be an excellent opportunity to enhance the pedestrian experience.*

*The Board was pleased with the private terrace and interior and exterior common recreation spaces shown on level seven. They also supported the roof level open space design and screening of mechanical equipment.*

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

*Belltown-specific supplemental guidance: Mixed-use developments are encouraged to provide useable open space adjacent to retail space, such as an outdoor café or*

*restaurant seating, or a plaza with seating. Residential buildings should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating useable, attractive, well-integrated open space.*

The Board unanimously supported the efforts to design the right-of-way to Green Street standards and concepts, particularly the widened sidewalks and the corner and mid-block curb bulbs. The Board was very pleased with the streetscape concepts presented at this meeting and supported the notion that this intersection is a gateway to Belltown.

**At the Second EDG meeting, the Board encouraged the applicant to explore extending the landscaping and right-of-way improvements across Second Avenue.**

*At the Recommendation meeting, the Board was very supportive of the proposed landscape plan on Second Avenue that continues and transitions from Cristalla's existing landscaping scheme as the sidewalk moves north to south. The Virginia Street landscaping plan reflects existing planting scheme near 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue on the west half of the block. The level 7 landscape plan incorporates the existing Cristalla firewall (formerly adjacent to Commodore hotel), plants a green screen next to it, keeping areas of transparency at the cut-outs previously located at the Commodore's light well. The roof has primarily hardscape with a few planted oversize pots.*

**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.**

*Belltown-specific supplemental guidance: 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; and (c) install plaques or other features on the building that pay tribute to Belltown history. Green Streets are street rights-of-way that are enhanced for pedestrian circulation and activity with a variety of pedestrian-oriented features, such as sidewalk widening, landscaping, artwork, and traffic calming. Interesting street level uses and pedestrian amenities enliven the Green Street and lend special identity to the surrounding area.*

The Board was very pleased with the conceptual streetscape improvements and encouraged the streetscape design to integrate information about the re-grade history through informational signage, artwork, etc that communicate the unusual history of the intersection and these sites. These four corners provide a critical juncture between downtown and Belltown due to the shift in the grid one block to the south.

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

**This priority guideline was added at the Second EDG meeting.**

## **E. Vehicular Access & Parking**

### **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 discussed the above grade parking levels proposed for each of the two buildings. They agreed that the parking levels shown on the north tower would have more exposure to the street and pedestrian environment. In particular, the portion that wraps the southeast corner of the building near the main entry. While the proposed screening is helpful, the uses along the corner should be as active as possible. The Board suggested shifting the work studios to the corner to help activate the space. The Board applauded the configuration of uses on the south tower and felt that it successfully minimizes the presence of parking along these facades. If solid material is selected to screen the above grade parking in both buildings, it should receive special treatment that provides visual interest to the pedestrian while remaining cohesive with the building design.

**At the Second EDG meeting, the Board reiterated their support for taking all access from the alley. The Board was also very supportive of the efforts to screen the presence of parking uses in the above grade parking levels with active uses such as hotel rooms and work studios.**

*At the Recommendation meeting, the Board discussed the proposed uses on level 2-6 and was supportive of the combination of uses including: parking with work studios wrapping all of the Virginia façade, two-story retail and work studios wrapping most of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Façade, parking with work studios wrapping all of the Virginia façade and most of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Façade on levels three and four; half floor of parking with townhomes wrapping all of the Virginia façade and roughly half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue façade at the fifth level; and a half floor of parking with townhomes wrapping all of the Virginia façade and townhomes and work studios wrapping the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Façade at the sixth level. The Board was supportive of the proposed program of uses and how they are distributed to be sensitive to an active street life and neighboring residences.*

### **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 where possible. Screen from view those elements which for programmatic reasons cannot be located away from the street front.**

The Board was very pleased that the access has been proposed from the alley for both projects. The Board reiterated that accommodating the dumpsters within the buildings is strongly encouraged, so as to leave the alley less constrained. See also C-6.

**At the Second EDG meeting, the Board was very pleased to hear that the proposed north tower intends to accommodate the existing dumpsters from the alley within the proposed structure. The Board agreed that the proposed buildings should either accommodate the existing dumpsters within the buildings or set back the building face more than the two feet that is required along the alley by Code.**

### **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

Four departures from the Code were requested at this time.

1. **Maximum Tower Width (SMC 23.49.058 D.2).** The Code requires that the maximum facade width for portions of a building above 85 feet along the general north/south axis of a site (parallel to the Avenues) shall be 120 feet or 80 percent of the width of the lot measured on the Avenue, which ever is less. The proposed tower is approximately 142' wide (79% of the lot width) or 22 feet wider than allowed.

The proposed façade of the tower fronting 2nd Avenue is approximately 118 feet wide (66% of the lot width), but in elevation, when added to the north wall, which is angled to the northwest, the overall façade width is approximately 142 feet. The proposed tower's additional width is a function of, and response to Design Review Board direction, and public concern for the massing bulk, and issues of light and air in relation to adjacent structures. In adherence to DRB direction, the design has responded by faceting the massing which orients wall planes away from neighboring buildings and minimizes the perceived breadth of the building. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the proposed departure.

2. **Structural Building Overhangs (SMC 23.53.035 A.2).** Structural building overhangs shall be limited to a maximum horizontal extension of one foot and maximum vertical dimension of two (2) feet six (6) inches, and shall not increase the floor area or the volume of space enclosed by the building. At roof level, the projections may extend not more than three feet horizontally. The vertical dimension of the overhead horizontal projection at the roof level may be increased if the roof level is 100 feet or higher above the street elevation. The total area of these projections shall not exceed 30 percent of the area of any one facade (see Exhibit 23.53.035-A). A Departure has been requested to increase the structural overhang from one foot to three feet at the 2nd avenue garage screening area to allow for a better architectural solution. The proposal provides an additional two feet, which equals the three foot overhang allowed at the top of the building.

The 108' site depth allows for only 12" between the nose of a car parked in the garage and the property line. The concept for screening the parking relies on a layered facade and thus more room is necessary to add visual interest. The Board was pleased with the proposed scrim like design to screen the parking and voted unanimously in favor of the proposed departure.

3. **Street Level Use (SMC 23.49.009.B3).** The Code requires that 75% street level uses occur within 10' of the property line. A Departure has been requested to increase the 10' min. distance from the property line for street level uses to 28'. This is an additional 18 feet from property line.

The project maintains 78% street front use, but nearly a third of this area is beyond 10' from the property line, reducing the amount of space we can include to 50%. The ground level is intentionally pulled away from the property line to create additional pedestrian space and the opportunity for a sidewalk cafe or retail spill-out spaces. The departure provides an additional 18 feet of depth that street front uses can be from property line. The Board was very supportive of the proposed departure and the increased pedestrian open space at the building entry and located at the corner to reinforce activity at the intersection. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the proposed departure.

- 4. Common Recreation Area (SMC 23.49.010 B.1).** The Code requires an area equivalent to Five (5) percent of the gross floor area in residential use, excluding any floor area in residential use gained in a project through a voluntary agreement for housing under SMC Section 23.49.015. The proposed project is required to have 13,533 sf of Common Recreation Space. The proposed design includes 11,193 sf of Common Recreation space (6,579 sf of exterior common recreation space and 4,614 sf of interior common recreation space). The amount of proposed exterior common recreation space exceeds 50% of the total amount proposed (by 2,340 sf).

The Board generally agreed that rather than providing extensive interior amenities, this concept encourages residents to support local businesses in the neighborhood. However, the Board also felt that it is important for downtown residents to have access to work spaces for those activities that are not well suited to the residential unit or common recreational spaces.

**The Board recommended approval of the proposed departure with the following conditions:**

- 1. Increase the total common recreation space from the 83% proposed to 90% of the required amount.**
- 2. Additional interior common recreation space should be provided to increase the total to 90%**
- 3. The additional open space does not need to meet the minimum dimensional standards.**