



**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE
OF THE
DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Numbers: 3007605
3007606

Addresses: 2015 Second Avenue
1931 Second Avenue

Applicant: Dan Foltz, Weber Thompson Architects
For The Justen Company

Meeting Date: October 9, 2007
Report Date: October 29, 2007

Board members present: Matt Allert
Jim Falconer
Marta Falkowska, Chair
Mark Hinshaw, Substitute
Kelly Mann

Board members absent: Dana Behar
Bill Gilland

DPD staff present: Lisa Rutzick, Land Use Planner

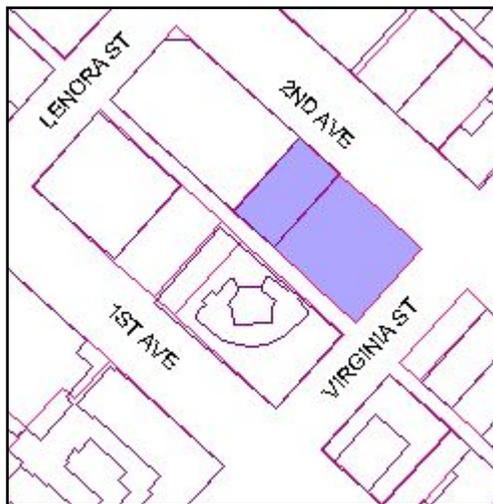
SITE & VICINITY

The proposed development sites are located at the corner of 2nd Avenue and Virginia Street in the Belltown neighborhood of downtown Seattle. The sites are on the West side of 2nd, the North Tower is on the quarter block north of Virginia and the South Tower is on the quarter block to the south of Virginia. The north site contains a surface parking lot, while the south site contains three buildings; 1919 2nd Avenue, a four story building, 1923 2nd Avenue, a one story building and the Terminal Sales Annex. There are also two small parking lots on the south site. The Terminal Sales annex is under review for possible designation as a City of Seattle landmark. 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.

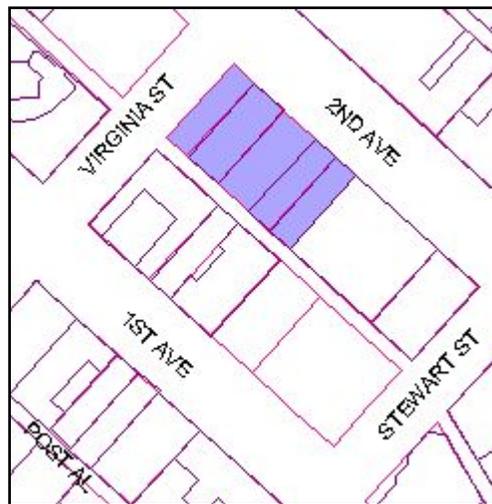
Both sites are zoned DMC 240/290-400. The height limit for this zone is 240 feet, however if a residential tower is proposed that participates in the creation or funding of low income house under SMC 23.49.015, and if the building is designed and built to at least a silver LEED level, it is eligible 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.

Both sites are 180' 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 Land Use minimum dimensional requirements.



PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

3007605 - 2015 2nd Avenue



3007606 - 1931 2nd Avenue

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.

The proposed development at 1931 Second Avenue is for a 38 story structure with 185 residential units, 117 hotel rooms and 2,000 sq. ft. of retail commercial use at grade. Parking for 316 vehicles will be located both below and above grade.

DESIGN PRESENTATION

A joint site review for both towers 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 and a hotel entrance on Second Avenue. 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 2nd 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 2nd 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 2nd and Virginia. All of the schemes proposed a base that is eroded at the corner of 2nd 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 2nd 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 2nd. A distinctive, faceted vertical bar hovers above the base and rises from the corner at 2nd 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 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 2nd 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 2nd 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 2nd 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 2nd 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 2nd Avenue building. The north façade of the 1915 2nd 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 Crystalla 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 Crystalla 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.

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.

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.

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 been 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.*

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.

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.**

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.

- 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.

- 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 Cristalla building in terms of dumpsters and lighting.

D. Public Amenities

- 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.

- 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.

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.

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.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

Three departures from the Code were requested at this time.

1. COMMON RECREATION AREA (SMC 23.49.010. B1)

The Code requires that 5% of the gross floor area in residential use shall be designated as common recreation area. This departure was requested for the north tower only.

2. ROOFTOP MECHANICAL COVERAGE (SMC 23.49.008.D2)

The proposed design would increase the coverage of rooftop mechanical equipment from the 55% maximum to 70% coverage in the south tower and 75% in the north tower.

The Board indicated that they would consider the departure requests. However, the Board's recommendation on the requested departures will be reserved until the final Board meeting and will be based upon the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure. This departure was requested for both towers.

Departure Summary Table for North Tower

STANDARD	REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	BOARD GUIDANCE
COMMON RECREATION AREA <i>SMC</i> <i>23.49.010. B1</i>	5% of residential GFA = 18,351 sq. ft.	13,600 sq. ft.	The Board will continue to entertain the departure request based on the ability of the design to include vibrant, functional, well-programmed common areas for the building residents, as well as right-of-way improvements.
ROOFTOP MECHANICAL COVERAGE <i>SMC</i> <i>23.49.008.D2</i>	55%	75%.	The Board will continue to entertain the departure request based on the ability of the design to include vibrant, functional, well-programmed right-of-way improvements.

Departure Summary Table for South Tower

STANDARD	REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	BOARD GUIDANCE
ROOFTOP MECHANICAL COVERAGE <i>SMC</i> <i>23.49.008.D2</i>	55%	70%	The Board will continue to entertain the departure request based on the ability of the design to include vibrant, functional, well-programmed right-of-way improvements.

NEXT STEPS

At the Second EDG Meeting, the Board would like to review the following:

- Cross sections through the sites to Capitol Hill showing other tall buildings in the vicinity (both existing and proposed).
- Additional pedestrian views to the sites.
- Continue to show both projects in a combined presentation.
- Show bulk and scale alternatives and the light and shadow impacts that result.
- Prepare a fly-by analysis of the towers from various elevations as viewed from within the surrounding nine-block area. (See page 7).