

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

**Meeting Date: October 23rd, 2007
Report Date: November 5th, 2007**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number: 3007746

Address: 1121 Stewart Street

Applicant: David Spiker, Architect for Collins Woerman
and representative for Stewart & Minor LLC

Board members present: Wilmot Gilland, Chair
Matt Allert
Dana Behar
Jim Falconer
Marta Falkowska

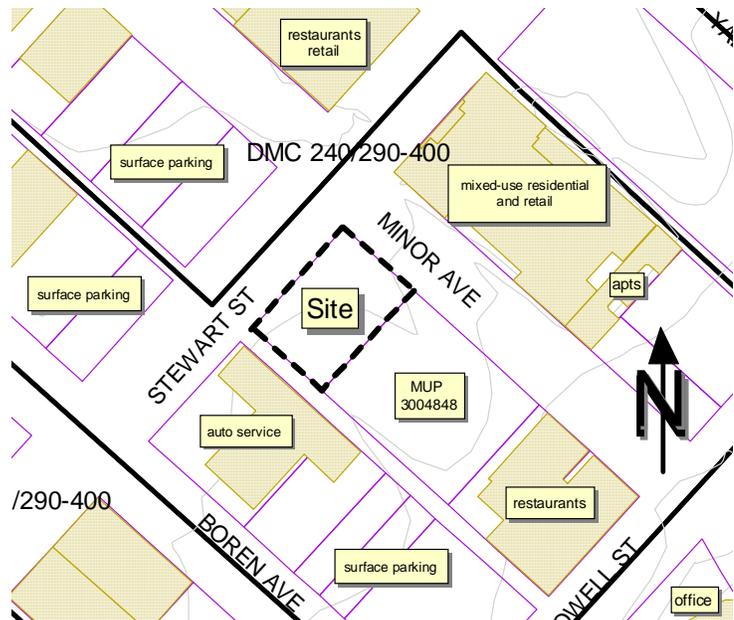
Board members absent Kelly Mann (excused)

DPD staff present: Shelley Bolser, Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

The 9,960 square foot corner site is located on Minor Avenue and Stewart Street. A surface principal use pay parking lot currently occupies the site.

The site is located in the Denny Triangle area north of downtown in a pedestrian-oriented area with frequent transit service. The area is in the process of redevelopment, with several projects under construction or in the permitting process. The existing streetscape reflects a mix of older residential, mid-century office buildings, newer mixed-use developments, and surface parking lots that will likely experience major development changes in the near future.



The proposed development site is located on a quarter-block sized development parcel, which is in a Downtown Mixed Commercial zone with height limits that vary based on proposed uses and bonus programs (240', 290' and 400'; DMC 240/290-400).

The site slopes slightly down to the northwest. Surrounding development consists of mixed styles of newer mixed-use residential buildings, office buildings, older apartment buildings, commercial structures of varying ages, and surface parking lots. Architecture of adjacent buildings varies based on age. Older residential buildings are composed of brick or stucco. Newer development is primarily glass, metal, concrete and stone finish with modern style architecture. Other commercial structures are a mix of stucco, metal, masonry, glass, and wood, facades. Several projects either under construction or in the permitting process are located within a one-block radius of the project. The area is experiencing a high level of development and the resulting streetscape reflects a wide variety of architectural styles and finishes.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal includes the construction of one mixed-use residential, hotel, and retail building with below grade parking. The proposed project consists of an approximately 400-foot tall tower with one level of retail/restaurant/lobby, seven floors of hotel, one floor of shared amenities for hotel guests and residents, and 15 floors of residential loft units. The applicant wishes to obtain LEED Silver certification for the project. The proposed tower would be centrally located on the small site.

Seven floors of parking would be located below grade. All the parking spaces would be designated for residents only, with hotel guests served by valet parking and cars stored on nearby parking lots via agreements with those property owners.

The proposal includes approximately 180 residential units, 132 hotel rooms, 4,800 square feet of retail and/or restaurant area at the street level, and 120 parking stalls.

DESIGN PRESENTATION

Three schemes were presented at the Early Design Guidance meeting. All of the options included a 400' tall tower with hotel and residential use, at-grade commercial and lobby space, and below grade parking. Each of the residential levels would include approximately 12 units.

The applicant explained that due to the limited site size and the elevator core requirements, the only way to vary the three schemes was through vehicular access, orientation of the commercial space and lobby, and treatment of the tower shape, façade, design, and materials. The orientation of the tower (narrower when viewed from the southwest) provides for maximum sunlight penetration to the north.

The first scheme (Scheme 1) included vehicular access from a curb cut on Minor Street, near the southeastern edge of the property. The proposed ground floor areas would include retail/restaurant tenant space at the corner of Minor Ave and Stewart St, with most of the tenant frontage on Minor Street. Hotel and residential lobby area would front on Stewart Street. Service and loading areas would be located at the alley. The tower massing indicated a consistent vertical treatment from base to top on the Stewart St façade.

The second scheme (Scheme 2) included vehicular access from the alley with a porte-cochere (passenger drop off area) via two curb cuts on Minor Ave. The proposed ground floor area would include retail/restaurant tenant space at Minor Ave in front of the porte-cochere and another tenant space at Stewart St near the alley. Hotel and residential lobby area would front on the corner of both streets. Service and loading areas would be located at the alley. The tower massing indicated horizontal angled fins at the hotel levels, with limited façade extensions at the upper residential levels.

The third scheme (Scheme 3) included vehicular access from the alley near the southwest area of the property. The applicant would also like to explore the possibility of an on-street passenger loading area at Stewart St. The proposed ground floor areas would include retail/restaurant tenant space at the corner of Minor Ave and Stewart St, with most of the tenant frontage on Minor Street. Hotel and residential lobby area would front on Stewart Street. Service and loading areas would be located at the alley. The tower massing indicated window shade fins at the top five residential levels, with limited façade extensions at the lower building levels.

The applicant noted that the third option maximizes the available tenant space at the street level, the placement of the tenant space activates the street corner, and the proposal includes a shared lobby for residential and hotel uses.

The applicant also explained that there is an application for another tower on the parcel immediately southeast of the subject property (MUP #3004848). The tower spacing requirements in this area include a 60' separation. The first applicant to obtain an issued MUP would set the precedent from which all other projects are required to provide separation. If the adjacent applicant obtains a MUP first, nearby projects also have the option of seeking a Special Exception to reduce the tower spacing requirement.

BOARD QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

The Board had the following questions and clarifying comments, with responses from the applicant:

- What happens to this project if the adjacent project receives an issued MUP first?
 - The applicant explained the development team would likely look at revising this proposal to a 160' tall building, since there are no tower spacing requirements at that height.
- Is the curb cut on Minor Ave shown in Scheme I allowed?
 - Staff explained that due to recent policy direction from the DPD Director, the curb cut would not be permitted unless the applicant demonstrated that there was a safety issue with using the alley for vehicular access.
- Would the northeast façade be transparent?
 - Some units would face the corner, and the material would wrap from the west façade around the north corner.
- Referencing Scheme III and looking at the alley, it appears the loading area would be very visible from the street due to its proximity to the alley/street intersection. Would it be possible to push the loading area further into the alley so it is less visible?
 - The site is small, which makes placement of vehicle access and service areas at the alley less flexible.
- What departures would be needed for Scheme III?

- On Minor Ave, the maximum tower width is 80% of the site, without modulation. Because of the small site size (80' width), the modulation requirement would require a modulation effort after 60' of unmodulated building width. The departure request is to provide 75' of unmodulated building width.
- How are the three towers different in the three massing schemes?
 - Scheme III indicates a regular and organized façade with symmetry. This is the applicant's preference.
 - Schemes I and II indicate a more irregular building façade treatment.
- Has there been any attempt to coordinate the streetscape with the adjacent site to the south, and the site that is kitty-corner across Stewart/Minor from the subject property?
 - The applicant hasn't yet attempted to coordinate this, but intends to work with adjacent property owners, especially the applicant to the south
- The proposed development would include a potentially blank wall at the south façade. How does the applicant intend to treat that wall, especially considering it may be a permanent condition as a result of tower spacing requirements?
 - The applicant is considering a creative façade treatment, perhaps similar to the south wall of the new tower at 5th & Madison, and/or a light well inset from the property line
 - The applicant team recognizes this wall as a potential challenge and will meet with building code reviewers to determine what treatments are possible

PUBLIC COMMENT

Six members of the public attended the Early Design Guidance meeting:

- Is it true that the first applicant to obtain an issued MUP will have the right to the tower, and the other applicant will have to setback from that tower?
 - Staff confirmed that this is the case, but it is also possible for the second applicant to seek a special exception approval to reduce the tower setback requirement.
- Support for the more slender tower proposed for this site and the simplicity of the design
- The tower should include an interesting top that would be consistent with the proposed design
- Support for the proposed departure from modulation requirements; it would be better to have a symmetrical consistent design and not include a random notch to fulfill code requirements.
- The building will be visible on Stewart St to people traveling west from Capitol Hill. Stewart St is becoming a sort of corridor gateway from east to west and the north façade should incorporate façade treatments that wrap from the Minor Ave to the Stewart St façade.

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 guidelines found in the City of Seattle's *Design Review: Guidelines for Downtown Development* of highest priority to this project.

The Board noted that the project includes the following positive aspects:

- Proposal to place all parking below grade and accessed from the alley are strongly positive aspects of the proposal; if this changes, guidance statements below may change
- The EDG packet is thorough and provides a good demonstration of the proposal, including guideline responses and context analysis
- The loft style residential units could translate to an interesting façade expression at the upper levels
- The proposed visual anchoring of the street corner is positive
- The applicant preferred third option is positive, especially the proposed development at the base, the larger proposed retail space, and the shared lobby space at Stewart St.

“Hot Buttons” are items initially discussed by the Board and include items of top importance for the design. For this project, the Board determined the hot buttons were:

1. Adjacent development

- It will be critical to see how the proposed development relates to the proposed development immediately to the south
- Issues include:
 - Potential blank wall on the south façade
 - How the proposed development will relate to the character in this area of the Denny Triangle
 - How each project may relate to the other depending on the first to obtain a MUP and the tower placement

2. Alley facade

- Stewart St is both a vehicular and pedestrian corridor for east-west travel. The proposed loading area is close to the alley intersection and should be carefully treated with respect to the pedestrian environment at the sidewalk
- It's not necessary to 'hide' the service areas since that can increase opportunity for crime, but the design should include treatments to make the area more attractive in relation to the pedestrian environment.
- One possible method to achieve this includes wrapping the lobby façade approximately 10' into the alley facade

The applicant should address all priority guidelines and Board guidance below during the next stages of design review.

A. Site Planning and Massing – Responding to the larger context
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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.

The proposed building design should focus on development of the corner at upper and lower levels and respond to the existing architectural diversity in the neighborhood. The Board noted that this doesn't necessarily require mimicking the nearby façade treatments, but referencing existing context visually in some way. The 'simplicity' of the proposed tower design is a positive aspect. The applicant should provide more design information at the MUP stage of review regarding the small floor plate design and the techniques to achieve LEED silver.

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

The applicant noted that the intent is to use the maximum 10% height bonus allowed for screening rooftop features to create an interesting 'top' to the building. The Board noted that if amenity space is located at the top of the tower, it should also be visually well integrated with the design of the top and screening of mechanical equipment. Guidance also reflects the comments found in Hot Button #2.

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.

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.

The Board noted that the existing context in the neighborhood is changing rapidly and few projects are currently built or under construction. The proposed development should set an example and create positive context for the neighborhood. Wherever possible, the applicant should coordinate with other proposed developments in the Denny Triangle neighborhood and within a block of the site.

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.

The transition between lower hotel levels and upper residential loft levels should be well integrated, using the shared amenity level to add visual interest and visually express the change of use. The loft levels should also be expressed visually in the building façades.

If there are rooftop amenities, those should also be visually integrated with the building design.

The Board noted that the proposed elevator core and the small site, including the separation of elevators for hotel and residential uses, may present a challenge.

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.

The existing development in this area consists of street level pedestrian-oriented uses such as restaurants and bars. The proposed development should reinforce and increase the positive aspects of the pedestrian environment.

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

In addition to the guidance regarding the south façade in Hot Button #1, the proposed Stewart St façade should include the maximum possible glazing at the street level.

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

The proposed development should include articulation at the base near the building entries. The proposed drop-off area on Stewart St presents an interesting opportunity for development of the lobby entrance on Stewart. Stewart St doesn’t include many building entries, and this could be a unique aspect of the proposal.

Building entries on Minor Ave should reflect the quieter nature of that street front, including opportunities for people to occupy sidewalk areas in seating or ‘eddy’ spaces.

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.

Continuous overhead weather protection should be provided adjacent to all sidewalk areas. Articulation of the overhead weather protection, including a change in height, depth, material, or shape, can be used to emphasize building and façade changes.

C-6 Develop the alley facade. To increase pedestrian safety, comfort, and interest, develop portions of the alley façade in response to the unique conditions of the site or project.

Comments reflect the guidance found in Hot Button #2. The Board responded positively to the proposed vehicular access and service areas at the alley, but directed the applicant to make these areas more visually interesting to the pedestrian environment. Possible methods to achieve this guidance include wrapping the Stewart St façade treatment/fenestration into the alley façade, interesting use of colors and materials, etc.

D. Public Amenities – Enhancing the Streetscape and Open Space

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

The applicant should demonstrate compliance with this guideline at the MUP stage of review and provide details regarding landscaped areas in amenity spaces, paving materials at the street, street trees, and planted areas.

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.

As described in the guidance found in C-4, the building entries should be designed in response to the nature of Stewart St and Minor Ave, as applicable.

The proposed project is located in the Denny Triangle area near downtown. The architectural expression of the proposed building and the streetscape details should reflect the context of the immediate surrounding Denny Triangle neighborhood and not necessarily 'downtown' projects.

- D-4 Provide appropriate signage. Design signage appropriate for the scale and character of the project and immediate neighborhood. All signs should be oriented to pedestrians and/or persons in vehicles on streets within the immediate neighborhood.**

The applicant should provide a conceptual signage plan at the MUP stage of review, demonstrating compliance with this guideline.

- D-5 Provide adequate lighting. To promote a sense of security for people downtown during nighttime hours, provide appropriate levels of lighting on the building facade, on the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, and on signage.**

The applicant should provide a conceptual lighting plan at the MUP stage of review, demonstrating compliance with this guideline.

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

The applicant should provide information regarding this item at the MUP stage of review, demonstrating compliance with this guideline.

E. Vehicular Access and Parking – Minimizing the Adverse Impacts

- 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.**

Guidance reflects that found in Hot Button #2 and the response to Guideline C-6.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The following departures from the development standards were proposed at this phase:

Departure Summary Table

STANDARD	REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	APPLICANT'S JUSTIFICATION	BOARD RECOMMENDATION
Upper level development standards - Maximum tower width SMC 23.49.058.D.2 Modulate the building façade if longer than 80% of the property line	80% (66.4') max tower width without modulation	83' max. tower width without modulation	TBD	The Board will continue to entertain this request, provided the applicant can demonstrate proposal would better meet the intent of the adopted design guidelines.

- 1. Upper level development standards – maximum tower width (SMC 23.49.058.D.2):** The applicant proposes increase the unmodulated width of the tower on the Minor Avenue façade from 60' to 75'.

The Board indicated that they would continue to entertain the request for this departure as more information is received. Additional information in the form of diagrams and other graphics will be needed at the MUP stage of review in order to review this request. The request may relate to the building design, as it could be affected by the tower spacing issue.

NEXT STEPS

MUP Application:

1. Submit application for Master Use Permit (MUP) application. Appointments for MUP intake may be made by calling (206) 684-8850. Please contact Land Use Planner Shelley Bolser at (206) 733-9067 or shelley.bolser@seattle.gov when you have scheduled your MUP intake appointment.
2. Please include a written response to the guidance provided in this EDG, as noted in CAM 238, Attachment B. Plan on embedding four 11x17 colored and shadowed elevations, landscape and right-of-way improvement plans into the front of the MUP plan set (4 per sheet). Label all sheets for design review and provide a table of contents at the front of the plan set. CAM 238 may be accessed at <http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/dclu/Publications/cam/cam238.pdf>.
3. A traffic study or memo disclosing trip estimates may be required as part of the next phase of the MUP process.
4. Provide the following graphics, either in the MUP plan set or directly to Land Use Planner Shelley Bolser, following MUP intake:
 - a. Developed site plan of preferred scheme with surrounding block context showing other proposed structures.
 - b. Plans of all significant floor levels including below grade parking. Include scale and north arrow.
 - c. Sections of the project (east-west and north-south), including adjacent structures (existing and proposed) and labeling of building heights at changes in the façade.

- d. Graphics of the four facades, rendered to provide a sense of the depth of proposed façade treatments, colors, and materials (include proposed treatment for expression of loft levels)
- e. Detailed sketches of the street level facades, including canopies, entrances, materials, colors, etc.
- f. Detailed graphics of the building top and roof level (mechanical equipment location and screening, common recreation area, sculptural elements, etc)
- g. Perspective sketches of the streetscape experience from the pedestrian's point of view (especially at Stewart St and Minor Ave)
- h. Graphics demonstrating the proposed façade treatment at the street level for any blank facades and the alley
- i. Landscape plans, including plant species, size, and placement

Recommendation Meeting:

Include the following items in your design recommendation meeting submittal:

1. Graphic details of the building base, rooftop, façade articulation
2. Perspective sketches including:
 - a. Adjacent development
 - b. Projects currently in the permitting process (ex. 3003807, etc)
 - c. Existing conditions
3. Statement of project goals and response to existing context (and context of projects currently in review)
4. Written response to the Early Design Guidance
5. Developed site plan of preferred scheme with surrounding block context showing other proposed structures
6. Plans of all significant floor levels including below grade parking. Include scale and north arrow
7. Sections of the project (east-west and north-south), including adjacent structures (existing and proposed) and labeling of building heights at changes in the façade.
8. Graphics of the four facades, rendered to provide a sense of the depth of proposed façade treatments, colors, and materials
9. Detailed sketches of the street level facades, including canopies, entrances, materials, colors, etc.
10. Detailed graphics of the building top and roof level (mechanical equipment location and screening, amenity space, sculptural elements, etc)
11. Perspective sketches of the proposed development in the larger urban context
12. Perspective sketches of the streetscape experience from the pedestrian's point of view (especially at Stewart St and Minor Ave)
13. Graphics demonstrating the proposed façade treatment at the street level for any blank facades and the alley
14. Landscape plans, including plant species, size, and placement
15. Materials and colors board
16. Graphics demonstrating night illumination of the building (light coming from inside and light sources on the outer facades) and lighting fixture information
17. Any 3-dimensional studies and/or models will help the Board in their review
18. Parking plan, demonstrating internal parking circulation in context with the elevator core, access from the alley, and information about the valet/shared parking for the hotel use
19. Diagrams clearly describing the proposed departure(s) in contrast to the code requirement
20. Provide an electronic copy of the recommendation packet to the Land Use Planner at the time of recommendation packet submittal.