

DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES
OF
QUEEN ANNE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Meeting Date: March 5, 2008

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number: 3008521

Address: 301 Boren Ave. N.

Applicant: Callison for Vulcan Inc.

Board members present	Patrick Doherty, Chair Matt Roewe John Rose, Jr. Maria Barrientos Bill Vandeventer
------------------------------	---

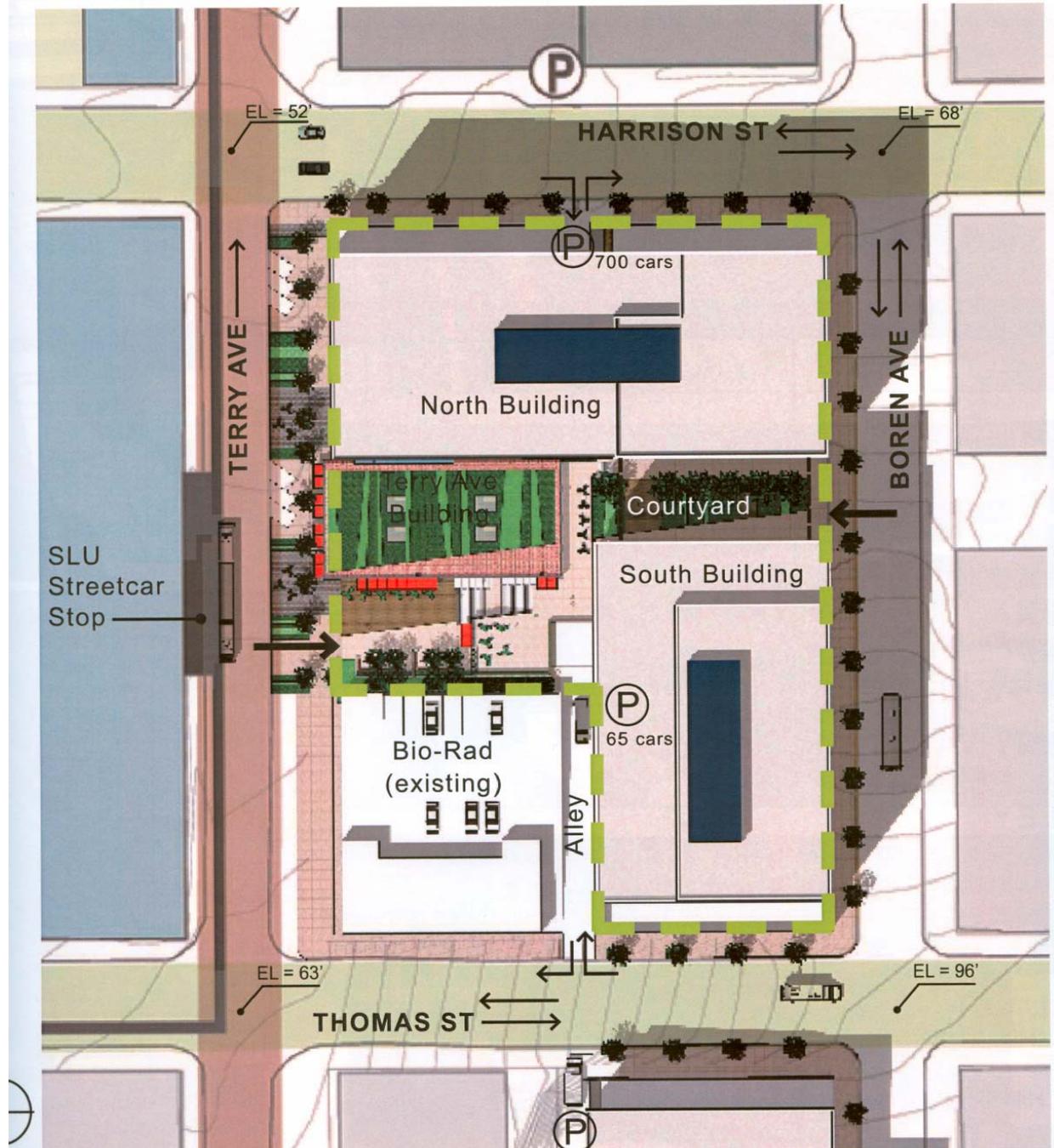
Land Use Planner present:	Scott Kemp
----------------------------------	-------------------

Site and Vicinity

The proposal site is a little over three quarter block portion of the group of new buildings on six different sites slated to be the headquarters of Amazon.com in South Lake Union. The block is bounded by Terry Ave. N. and Boren Ave. N. on the west and east and by Harrison St. and Thomas St. on the north and south. The site is zoned IC-65 and slopes markedly from west to east rising approximately 24 feet across the middle of the site. The applicant proposes to save a brick walled, heavy timber constructed, two story building on Terry Ave. N. (the Terry Building) in a preferred site scheme which requires vacation of approximately the north half of the mid-block, north/south alley. The Terry Building would have a green roof and a mid-block pedestrian path would allow retail to open out onto it in two places, one at a story above the other as the path rises to the east.

The proposed alley vacation would incorporate a turn around at its terminus partially by easement on the subject site.

Architectural objectives include a factory or warehouse-like, industrial rhythm with large window areas punched into a solid building structure. The pedestrian path would pass under a glass element connecting two of the building expressions with main building entries facing each other under it. Elevators from the parking garage would be accessed from the plaza placing people in the area as they pass to the building entries.



ALTERNATE 3: SITE PLAN



Public Comments

Public comment was received. Mr. Parker of the Biorad Corp., the owner and occupier of the only other land parcel on the block expressed concerns about construction impacts impacting his business and stated that the alley needs to continue to function for the business and for future users of the site.

PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED:

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 siting and design guidance described below and identified by letter and number those siting and design guidelines found in the City of Seattle's "*Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings*" of highest priority to this project. The guidance and recommendations made were agreed to by all of the Board members present, unless otherwise noted. While the notes below indicate the area the Board found most important, all of the Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings apply as well as those found in the SLU neighborhood design review guidelines.

A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics - The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation, and views or other features.

Site characteristics of note include an over three quarter block size of the development site, a topographical rise from east to west across the site of approximately 24 feet, the presence of an architecturally important two-story, brick, heavy timber building along Terry Ave. The proposed vacation of the northern portion of the mid-block alley would create another unique site characteristic.

Incorporating the Terry Building, as proposed in one of the alternatives and incorporating a mid-block, hill climb crossing along two sides of the building would be an outstanding response to the site characteristics. Also highly favorable would be the reuse of the Terry building with retail or restaurant frontage from three sides; the sidewalk, the south side along the lower portion of the crossing and from the east at the second story level of the building onto a higher level of the crossing.

A-2 Streetscape compatibility - The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.

A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street - Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

A-4 Human Activity - New Development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.

While the proposed mid-block, hill climb crossing is desirable feature and it should be highly animated by surrounding uses directly accessing it, the very long street frontages must be treated similarly. The project must not turn inward. Street life equally vibrant to the interior pedestrian areas much be present. Along sidewalks, uses must interact. Along the east/west streets the

topographical change will make this most challenging. The full block Harrison St. frontage is particularly important because of its length and because parking uses will present blank walls but for intervening uses.

B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility - Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to near-by, less-intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance

- Address both the pedestrian and auto experience through building placement, scale and details with specific attention to regional transportation corridors such as Mercer, Aurora, Fairview and Westlake. These locations, pending changes in traffic patterns, may evolve with transportation improvements.
- Encourage stepping back an elevation at upper levels for development taller than 55 feet to take advantage of views and increase sunlight at street level. Where stepping back upper floors is not practical or appropriate other design considerations may be considered, such as modulations or separations between structures.
- Relate proportions of buildings to the width and scale of the street.
- Articulate the building facades vertically or horizontally in intervals that relate to the existing structures or existing pattern of development in the vicinity.
- Consider using architectural features to reduce building scale such as:
 - landscaping;
 - trellis;
 - complementary materials;
 - detailing;
 - accent trim.

The Board did not express particular concern about the application of this guideline when presented with the preferred Option 3 massing plan. Given the proposed 120 foot height of the project and its great length along street frontages the height, bulk and scale guidelines must be kept in mind and they, like all applicable guidelines, continue to apply even without specific Board emphasis.

C-1 Architectural Context - New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.

C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency - Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.

The concept of architectural consistency is important between the two new building expressions proposed, the Terry Building to be preserved and the Bio-Rad building also on the block. It is important that the large, new buildings have expressions within them that introduce variation and interest without being too dissonant. The Bio-Rad building should be considered as it too is part

of the architectural context of the block; although it is not pointed to as a building from which design cues should be taken.

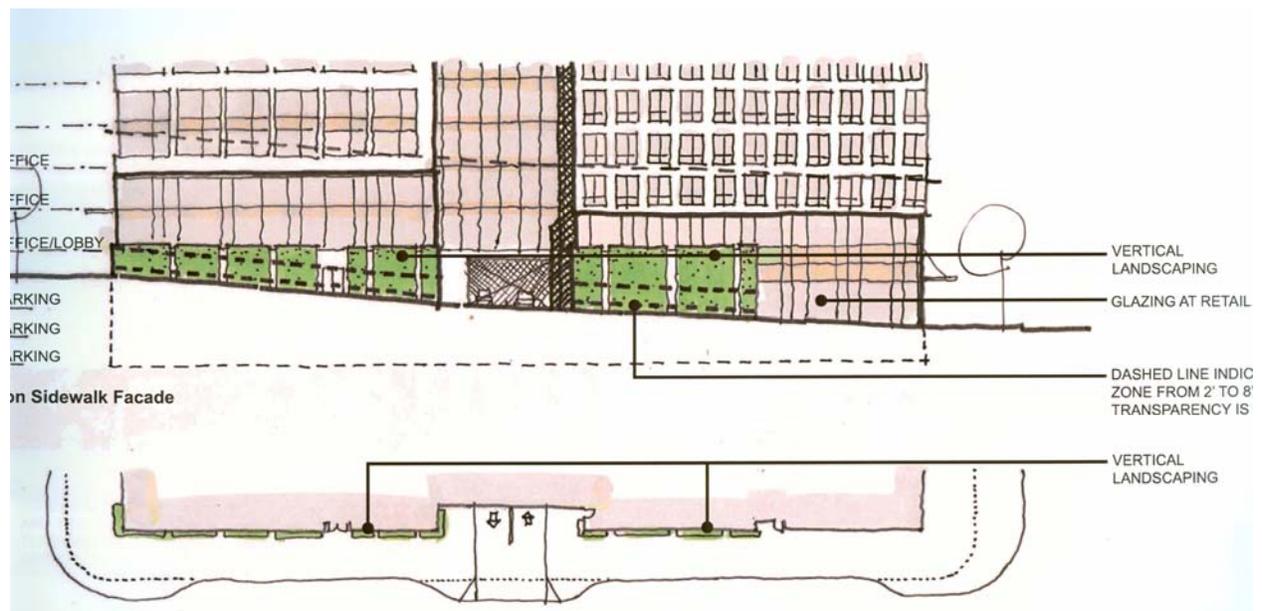
The Board encouraged the applicants to continue with the warehouse/industrial design influence indicated in the materials shown.

- C-3 Human Scale - The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve a good human scale.**
- D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances - Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.**
- D-7 Personal Safety and Security - Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.**

These large buildings on a large sight with very long street frontages and a large plaza/hill climb passing through have a scale which could easily create a sense of insignificance for the pedestrian. Instead, all of the pedestrian areas need to be designed with human scale features and amenities, with building features encouraging interaction with and liveliness of the pedestrian realm, and with “outdoor rooms” which are sized appropriately to provide an appealing space for pedestrians (eg. Harbor Steps not Red Square at U of W).

Departure Requests

A departure is being sought from two code provisions relating to the street level façade along Harrison St., one requiring 60% of the street level façade to be transparent and another limiting areas of blank façade to 15 feet; expandable to 30 feet if enhanced by architectural detailing, artwork, landscaping or other similar features with visual interest.



The Board did not indicate support for these departures as reflected in the design shown. They think Harrison St. is too important of a street and the extent of the proposed green wall is too great. The green wall does not make a lot of sense as part of the project or of the surrounding context. The Board stated any support for a departure will require the introduction of some retail use in the mid-block area, probably west of the driveway entry. A least one board member stated that requiring retail “or else” might be too restrictive. Whatever is settled upon, it should provide visual “transparency into program of the building.”

Discussion of how the sloping site along Harrison at the pedestrian level raised the question of how will the similar situation along Thomas St. (half a block rather than a full block width) be addressed. The Board will be interested to see how this is addressed as well.

Next Steps

The Board found the design at this early design guidance level to be very well thought out and headed in a very good direction. They like the placement of the buildings in Scheme 3 with the internal pedestrian crossing and warehouse like expression of the buildings. The applicant is encouraged to move on to MUP application.