

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE QUEEN ANNE MAGNOLIA  
SEATTLE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
TO DPD DIRECTOR**

**November 19, 2008**

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

**Project Number: 3009234**

**Address: 601 Westlake Ave. N.**

**Applicant: NBBJ for Vulcan Inc.**

**Board Members Present:** Matt Rowe, Chair  
John Rose  
Kristen Clem  
Mark Garrell  
Bill Vandeventer  
David Nemens

**Board Member Absent: None**

**DPD Representative: Scott Kemp**

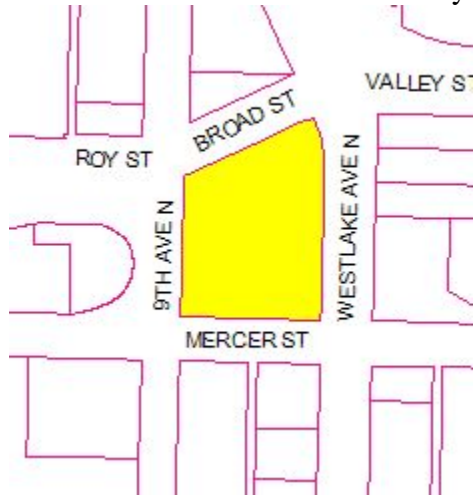
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**BACKGROUND:**

The project was the subject of a Pre-Design Public Meeting on July 2, 2008 at which time early design guidance was offered to be considered in the final proposed design. A record of that guidance can be found in the MUP file for this application. The applicant has applied for a Master Use Permit with a Design Review component. On November 19, 2008 the Design Review Board convened for a Public Meeting regarding this project. At this meeting site, floor and elevation plans, landscape plans and a scale model of the proposed building were presented.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

David Yuan and Andrew Molchany of NBBJ made the presentation to the DRB.



From the Early Design Guidance Meeting of July 2 2008, Alternative 3 was selected and developed by NBBJ. This alternative was based upon a concept diagram for the building which incorporated a major public open space at the corner of Westlake and Mercer.

The historic Ford and Pacific McKay buildings consists of three components: a showroom off Westlake, a narrow two level bar where the sales offices were located and a garage at the now vacated mid block alley. The historically designated façade elements and some interior elements are to be dismantled and reinstalled as part of the new development in a manner to be authorized by the Seattle Landmarks Board. The open space in the new design takes the form of the garage volume of the Pacific McKay building and makes an outdoor room out of it, including a new screen wall that is located along Mercer Street.

The massing of the new office building consists of two (6) story office bars that follow the traditional North/South street orientation of South Lake Union. To ensure that the massing is compatible with height, bulk and scale, the new building is set back approximately 60 feet from Mercer Street and 17 feet back on Westlake Avenue. On the top floor, a recess is added to reduce the perception of bulk behind the relocated historic Pacific McKay and Ford McKay buildings.



To activate the street level and to reinforce Westlake Ave as a “heart” location, retail use is located almost along the entire length of Westlake Avenue. To further foster human activity at the street level, a new 4,500 SF outdoor public plaza is proposed off Mercer. Adjacent to the south office entry, it features raised planters with LED lights set into the stone surface and a variety of seating areas. A portion of the plaza will be set at same level as the reconstructed historical showroom of the Pacific McKay. The idea is to have a coffee use in this interior space, and to let it spill into the outdoor plaza in good weather.

The focal point of the plaza is a fountain located at the back of the space that is intended to be visible from the street (similar to Paley Park in New York city) It’s intended to draw the visitors into the Plaza and to create white noise that helps with the sounds of traffic off Mercer.

A screen wall is used to separate the plaza visually from Mercer Street, the design of which has been worked through with the Landmarks Board Architectural Review committee. It follows the language of the early modern steel buildings and is composed as a series of C channels that form the structure and frame of the screen wall and addition.

An additional 1,580 SF open space is located at the northeast corner of the site near the north office entry and affords views of South Lake Union Park to the north.



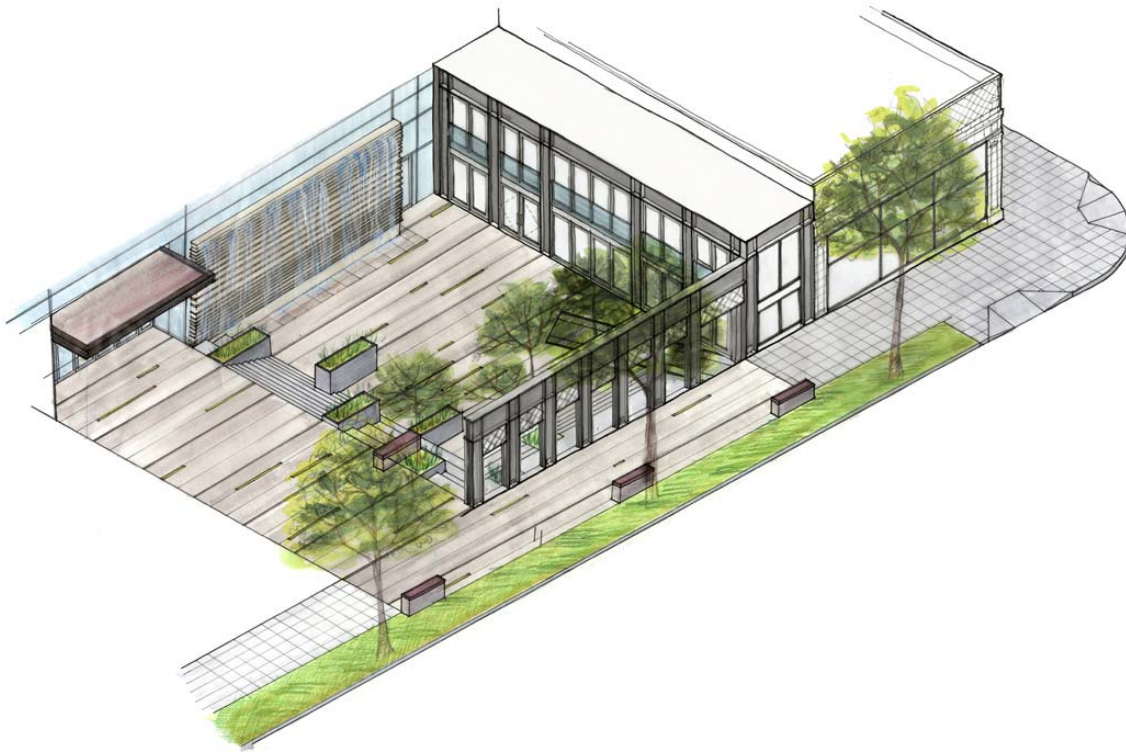
In addition to the provision of onsite open space, two moves further enhance the human scale and the pedestrian environment at street level. This first is that all parking is located below grade so that no cars are visible at the street level. The second is that on the entire block, there is only one curb cut purposed that provides access to the below grade garage and loading dock.

In developing the office plans, the design pays special attention to driving natural light deep into the floor plates. A light well opening has been created deep into the center of the floor plate; it's an interior court at levels 6 and 5, with a skylight in the ceiling of level 4 to bring light down to levels 4 and 3.

At the building exterior, the facade is articulated as two expressions. The first is a butt glazed glass curtain wall system that forms a neutral back drop for the historical buildings and enables the clear differentiation between the historic and the new portions of the project.

The second expression consists of a brick frame with infill openings of metal panel and glass that recalls the warehouse language of South Lake Union. The McKay project and the Shurgard storage facility, both with a brick frame vocabulary anchor the south west and south east corners of South Lake Union.

Two contrasting tones of brick are also employed to break down the scale of the office portions of the building, especially when viewed along Valley and Ninth Avenue. At the building corners that afford views of the Lake and the downtown skyline, the brick frame is articulated differently with a vertical expression consisting of floor to ceiling glass.



**Land Use Departures - Development Standards**

| DEVELOPMENT STANDARD                               | REQUIREMENT   | PROPOSED  | DEPARTURE AMOUNT REQUESTED  | COMMENT  |
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| Street Level Façade Setback per SMC 23.48.014.D.2. | Structures may be set back up to 12 feet from the property line subject to: 1) setback area landscaped per Section 23.48.024. 2) Additional setbacks shall be permitted for up to 30 % of the length of the set back street wall provided that the additional setback is located a distance of 20 feet or greater from any street corner. | Street-level façade setback from Mercer requested to be 60 ft. back for a lineal distance of 73'-10" ft. Setback area shall be landscaped per design of public open space and fountain as shown on landscape drawings (See L series drawings) | The setback area is located a distance of more than 20 feet from the corner of Westlake and Mercer. Length of setback street wall measures 73'-10". Code permits 30% of the street wall length to be setback from street which is equivalent to 22 feet of setback. Permission requested to increase this setback amount by 38 feet to a total setback distance of 60 feet. | Departure for setback is requested to accommodate proposed public plaza off Mercer as a response to the historic buildings on the site; a response to unique site characteristics. Guideline A-1 |

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| <p>Façade Requirement on Class 1 Street per SMC 23.48.014 C</p>   | <p>All facades on Class I pedestrian street shall be built to the property line along a minimum of 70% of the façade length</p> | <p>61% of Façade along Westlake Ave (Class 1 street) will be built to street property line</p>                | <p>Seek permission to reduce amount of façade built to street property line along Westlake by 9% from 70% to 61%.</p>  | <p>Departure requested since a portion of the Westlake street property line, at the NE corner is curved, making it infeasible for the building to be built to follow the precise curve of the street property line A-1</p>  |
| <p>Venting Requirements in Industrial Zones per SMC23.50.042</p>  | <p>Venting of odors to be located minimum 10 feet above adjacent grade</p>  | <p>Bottom of intake louver for garage ventilation be located at 8 feet above adjacent grade at open space</p> | <p>Seek permission to reduce height of bottom of intake louver above adjacent grade by 2 feet from 10 feet to 8 feet above adjacent grade</p>                                    | <p>Departure requested since there is insufficient space to situate louver at height of 10 feet above exist grade on the exterior facade. Departure to locate bottom of louver at 8 feet above grade is still above head of adjacent pedestrians and should not present a hazard, especially since the louver is used for intake air only. C-3</p>  |
| <p>Street Level Use Requirement on Westlake per SMC 23.48.019</p> | <p>Street Level Use to be located within 10 feet of street property line</p>  | <p>Street Level Use to be located within 12'-4" of street property line</p>                                   | <p>Seek permission to increase the stance that street level use is within the street property line by 2'-4" from 10 feet to 12'-4" between gridlines N and K along Westlake.</p> | <p>Departure requested since line of retail storefront between gridlines N and K along Westlake is straight while the street property line is curved at this location. The total street level use within 10 feet of the street property line is 72.56%. Departure request to increase the 10 foot dimension to 12'-4" would permit street level use as currently designed and located to meet the 75% street level use requirement. A-1</p> |



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| <p>23.50.035.c Structural Building Overhangs</p> | <p>Encroachment of bay window into public property shall be 15 feet at the line establishing the required open area and shall be reduced in proportion to the distance from such line by means of 45 degree angles drawn inward from the ends of such 15 foot dimension reaching a max of 9 feet along a line parallel to 3 feet from line establishing the open area.( Exhibit 23.53.035 C.) Max area of encroachment to be 36 SF.</p> | <p>The proposed bay window at the north east corner of the building is in the shape of a triangle measuring 4'-6" x 9'-1" x 10-1 1/2" for a total of 20 SF. It extends 4'-6" horizontally into public property.</p> | <p>The bay window at the north east corner extends 4'-6" horizontally into public property, 1'-6" more than the 3'-0" distance permitted by code.</p> | <p>At the Design Review Recommendation meeting for this project on November 19, 2008, the Design Review Board noted that it would approve a departure from the applicant in order to permit the bay window at the north east corner of the building facing South Lake Union to appear as a stronger and more unified visual element.<br/>C-1</p> |
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## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Public comment was requested. None was received.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

After considering the site and context, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities, drawings and model showing the proposal, the Design Review Board members recommended **approval of the subject design and approval of the development standard departures** listed above with the following **recommended conditions** (all recommendations were by all members agreeing, unless otherwise indicated). The recommendations summarized below were based on the plans submitted at that meeting.

### Board Deliberations

The Board stated that this was an excellent design expression. They support the “bookend par tee.” The historic elements are treated well. The courtyard element incorporated into the historic area with a fountain at the rear is thought to be an exceptional element.

There was discussion of the use of brick material in areas which do not reach to the ground and whether the lack of an appearance of structural grounding should be modified. The applicants presented a case that brick veneer is now recognized as and can therefore be used as a surface veneer material without mimicking a structural function. The Board took no action on this issue.

Attention was given to the Ninth Ave. streetscape environment as it is expected to be pedestrian in nature; a refuge from the busy Westlake and Mercer thoroughfares. It is recommended that the vent shaft be moved to the western side of the driveway so it is further away from the pedestrian activities at the northeast corner.

In looking at the relationship of the historic facades to the glass curtain wall structure behind them the Board recommended the applicant look at the proposed white spandrel panels to determine if another technique, such as fritted glass, would be a more pleasing expression.

Discussion of alley remnant expression on the north façade devising two building expressions led to direction that measures be taken to make it stronger. They discussed many possible approaches, including departures for a structural building overhang and reached no consensus on the approach to be taken; instead stating a design objective.

The Board discussed the two corner glass “point” elements in the design and determined that the northeastern one at the corner of Westlake and Ninth should be made wider and recommended granting a departure from the code limits for structural building overhangs to accomplish this.



The Board observed and the applicants agreed that the historic terra cotta wall element should not reach the glass curtain wall of the building behind it in exactly the same plane.

The Board debated the design of the screen wall along the property line in front of the plaza area on Mercer St. and decided that the easternmost segment of it should be removed.

The Board supports extension of the plaza surface material onto the Westlake Ave. public sidewalk along the plaza and encourages the applicants to pursue this with SDOT.

Departures:

The departures described in the matrix above are recommended to be approved based upon the rationales stated.

Recommended Design Review Conditions:

1. Move the vent shaft to the western side of the driveway.
2. Look at the proposed white spandrel panels to determine if another technique, such as fritted glass is more appropriate and pleasing.
3. The alley remnant expression on the north façade devising two building expressions shall be modified to make it a stronger element.
4. Make the corner glass “point” element at the northeast corner wider and more prominent.
5. The historic terra cotta wall element should not reach the glass curtain wall of the building behind it in exactly the same plane and instead shall be offset.
6. The easternmost segment of the screen wall along the property line in front of the plaza area on Mercer St shall be removed.