City of Seattle
Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning & Development
D.M. Sugimura, Director

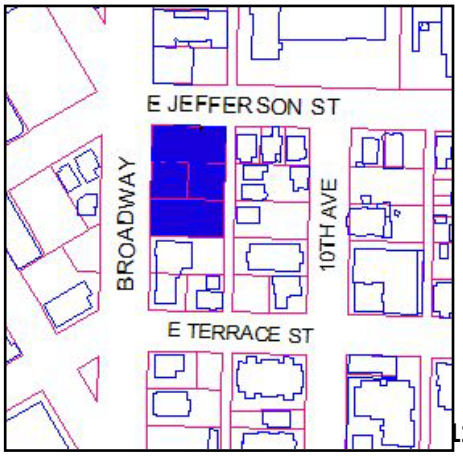
INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CAPITOL/FIRST HILL/CENTRAL AREA DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number:	**3010211**
Address:	**412 Broadway**
Applicant:	**Dave Heater, Ankrom Moisan Architects, for Lorig & Associates**
Meeting Date:	**December 2, 2009**
Report Date:	**December 11, 2009**
Board members present:	**Evan Bourquard** **Lisa Picard** **Sharon Sutton, Chair**
Board members absent:	**Brian Cavanaugh** **Wolf Saar**
DPD staff present:	**Lisa Rutzick, Land Use Planner**

SITE & VICINITY

The 14,400 SF rectangular shaped site is comprised of three lots with 180' of frontage on Broadway and 120' on East Jefferson Street. The site is currently zoned under two designations. The northern third of the site is zoned NC3-65' and the southern two-thirds are zoned MR, multi-family midrise. The applicant is pursuing a Contract Rezone for the site to Neighborhood Commercial 3 with an 85-foot height limit (NC3-85') with a self imposed building height of 75 feet.



The rear of the property abuts an alley to the east, while the southern boundary is shared with a 6-story apartment house. The vacant site is currently marked by a deep excavation (up to 60') made necessary by environmental remediation work.

The site slopes in 2 directions from its high point at the intersection of Broadway and Jefferson, falling approximately 10' from Broadway to the alley and 6' from Jefferson to the south property line. The site slopes slightly on the East side and South side.

The current comprehensive plan designation for the site is "Urban Village". The site is characterized by the confluence of 4 different zoning districts: MR (Multi-family Residential, Midrise) to the south; NC3-65' (Neighborhood Commercial) to the west; NC3-85' (Neighborhood Commercial) to the north and MIO-105' (Major Institution Overlay District) to the northeast. Existing land use, adjacent to the site, reflects the zoning above. The site also lies exactly at the boundary between two neighborhoods: First Hill to the west and 12th Avenue / Squire Park to the east. In addition, The Yesler Terrace / Little Saigon neighborhood begins one block to the south on the other side of Boren Avenue.

Land uses directly adjacent to the site include:

- North of and adjacent to the property group and across East Jefferson Street is 500 Broadway, a mixed use apartment.
- Northeast of the property group and across East Jefferson Street is 919 East James Street, a Seattle University Dormitory.
- Northwest of the property group and across Broadway is 515 Minor Avenue, the First Hill Medical Building.
- West of and adjacent to the property group and across Broadway is a commercial office building.
- South of and adjacent to the property group is the "Cal Anderson House", a multi-family residential building.
- East of and adjacent to the property group across the alley is 917 East Jefferson Street, a mixed use duplex (residential and commercial).
- East of and adjacent to the property group across the alley is 415 10th Avenue, a 75-unit apartment building.

Broadway street is designated a minor arterial. E. Jefferson is designated a collector arterial and is an important transit route. The bus-stop in front of the site on Jefferson provides intermittent bursts of foot traffic all day long. The site is currently served by public transit.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal includes the construction of a six story structure that would include approximately 95 residential units, ground level retail uses and below grade parking for approximately 120 vehicles.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: JULY 15, 2009

DESIGN PRESENTATION

Two code-compliant schemes, and one scheme requiring a contract rezone approval were presented. All of the options include a driveway entrance from the alley, a residential courtyard on the alley side, a residential lobby on Broadway Avenue, and approximately 7,000 SF of commercial area on the ground level.

The first scheme (Massing Alternative 1) proposed retail and residential units to form a "U" along E Jefferson St, Broadway and a return leg on the South side of the site. A courtyard was proposed to the East of the building, on the alley side, almost at the mid-block. The massing follows the zoning requirements required by both NC3-65 zone and the MR zone.

The second scheme (Massing Alternative 2) proposed retail and residential units to form a "U" along E Jefferson St, Broadway and a return leg on the South side of the site. A courtyard was proposed to the East of the building, on the alley side, almost at the mid block. This scheme allows flat plates at all levels including the roof, and meets the building height at the 60'-0" limit imposed by MR zone.

The third scheme, preferred by the applicant, (Massing Alternative 3) proposed a contract rezone for the whole site from NC3-65' and MR zone to NC3-85' zone with self imposed 70'-0" height limit. The extra height would allow the retail floor level to be raised to meet the sidewalk while maintaining the desired ceiling heights. The proposed retail and residential units form a "U" along E Jefferson St, Broadway and a return leg on the South side of the site. The building is set back 7'-0" at street level on Broadway to enhance the pedestrian experience along the retail spaces on the ground level. A courtyard is proposed to the East of the building, on the alley side, almost at the mid-block.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately six members of the public attended the Early Design Guidance meeting. The following comments were offered:

- Clarification of the vehicular exiting onto the alley, the two foot dedication and the additional five foot setback shown as a landscape buffer along the alley. Also interested in the type of retail anticipated for the proposed commercial spaces.
- Concern that the proposed building does not respond to the context and that the massing studies misrepresent the existing context. Prefer residential uses at street level and less commercial uses at ground level. Would like to see terraced open spaces along Broadway instead of decks along the alley. Objects to the departures because the proposed design doesn't show how the project better meets the intent of the guidelines.
- Prefer retail uses at ground level. Clarification of the use programming for the south end of the building and the division of the commercial space into multiple retail uses.
- Questioned whether the designers considered going up to 85 feet in height on the Neighborhood Commercial zoned portion of the building and not proposing to increase height on the Midrise zoned portion. Also questioned the viability of the retail uses next to the bus stop.
- Clarification that the proposed width of the sidewalk along Jefferson is 12 feet.

INTIAL RECOMMENDATION MEETING: DECEMBER 2, 2009

DESIGN PRESENTATION

The design concept presented at the Initial Recommendation meeting included emphasis on the corner with a tower element located at the intersection of Broadway & Jefferson, creating a vertical expression capped by a heavy cornice. A vertical seam between the corner tower and retail colonnade on Broadway suggests a point of passage. The seam is more transparent than other parts of the elevation and the residential entry is located at the bottom of this seam. On the South and East elevations the building transitions to a lighter metal skin and horizontal cementitious lap siding, which is used where the building projects or recedes. The material palette includes brick, large windows, metal and glass Juliette balconies, metal and cementitious siding.

The applicant presented several alternatives for the residential entry, as requested by the Board at the EDG meeting. The applicant also addressed the proposed landscaping on the roof deck, along the alley elevation, and on the major rights of way of Broadway and East Jefferson Street. The design concept for the landscaping along Broadway is to provide plantings adjacent to the street as well as next to the building, with jogs in the transition between paving and landscaping to coordinate with the rhythm of the building facade. While the upper levels of the Broadway elevation are required to be set back from the property line to maintain clearances from existing power lines, the first and second stories have been voluntarily stepped back 7', creating a greater pedestrian experience along Broadway. The applicant proposes planters with vertical greenery next to the brick pilasters, and zones next to the retail storefronts for tables, chairs, or merchandise to activate the sidewalk.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately xx members of the public attended the Initial Recommendation meeting. The following comments were offered:

- Interested in the Jefferson Street elevation. Feels NE corner should relate strongly to the pedestrian, particularly the area where the alley meets the sidewalk should be softened. Appreciate the double height retail space along Broadway.
- Does not feel the proposed building responds well to the scale and transition to either the east or the south. Confused as to why 20 foot tall retail is preferable. Does not like the asymmetry of the windows or the Juliette balconies. Finds the design to be incoherent and the brick should wrap onto the alley façade and be a lighter shade.
- Clarify that the housing units will be market rate.
- Clarified that a restaurant use is preferred tenant at the corner location. Would prefer to see neighborhood serving services as future tenants.

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 Multifamily and Commercial Buildings* of highest priority to this project. The Board also consulted with the adopted neighborhood specific guidelines *Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines*.

A. Site Planning

A-1 <u>Responding to Site Characteristics</u>. The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as prominent intersections and unusual topography.

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

The Board discussed the location of the residential entrance and agreed that it should be shifted away from the prominent corner intersection and instead be located on the north façade or at the south end of the west facade. This allows the programming of this corner to become a more vibrant commercial space that is not competing with the residential entrance.

At the Initial Recommendation meeting, the residential entrance continued to be located next to the corner retail space along Broadway. Two alternatives entries were also shown exploring other possible locations for the residential entry, however they did not work as well due with the architecture or site slope.

A-4 <u>Human Activity</u>. New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity along the street.

The Board agreed that commercial uses (and not residential uses) at the ground level are highly desirable at this location.

At the Initial Recommendation meeting, the Board agreed that the proposed fabric awnings were an odd choice along Broadway and that they would not allow light to the sidewalk below. The Board would like to see greater exploration of the design and material selection of the canopies along Broadway that respond to the architecture, provide overhead protection and enhance the streetscape.

A-5 <u>Respect for Adjacent Sites</u>. Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.

The Board agreed that the massing and modulation of the proposed building should strive to create a good transition to the residential uses to the east in terms of optimizing solar access and minimizing shadow impacts, as well as reducing any sense of looming over the downhill neighborhood.

At the Initial Recommendation meeting, the Board did not discuss this issue but noted that the design of the northeast corner has been simplified by eliminating the cornice, and stepping back slightly to decrease the sense of massing.

A-10 **<u>Corner Lots</u>. Buildings on corner lot should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.**

The Board is excited by the potential of this location at this prominent intersection to ground this corner with a distinctive, strong form activated by commercial uses in larger commercial spaces. The Board recommended locating the residential entrance away from the corner location in order to allow the commercial uses and character to be uninterrupted.

See A-3.

B. Height, Bulk, and Scale

B-1 **<u>Height, Bulk & Scale Compatibility</u>. 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 anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones**

The Board will be interested in how the proposed building is viewed from the east and is sensitive to the properties located in the lower topography, zone and scale to the east. Stepping down or eroding the uppermost floor(s) to respond to the lower scaled height limit of the neighborhood to the east may be appropriate. The Board also encouraged the design of the building massing to be sensitive to negative shadow impacts on properties to the east.

The Board did not discuss this issue at the Initial Recommendation meeting.

C. Architectural Elements

C-1 **<u>Architectural Context</u>. 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 **<u>Architectural Concept and Consistency</u>. 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.**

The Board looks forward to seeing a cohesive architectural design that strives for a bold design that is reflective of the varied community and sets a precedent for high quality development in the neighborhood. The Board wants to see good quality materials consistently used throughout the building.

At the Initial Recommendation meeting, the Board discussed at length the fenestration pattern and alignment, as well as the question of asymmetry in the design as proposed along Broadway. The Board felt that the fenestration should be simplified and there should be more attention to the continuous application of

datum lines. The Board also recommended simplifying the brick module along Broadway and continuing the spandrel lines established by the corner bay. Also, the asymmetry of the brick module should be explored and simplified. The Board liked the vertical notch that draws attention to the residential entrance, however, they agreed that there should be greater differentiation of the vertical notch along Broadway with a different parapet.

Along Jefferson Street, the Board agreed that more attention to the alignment of the datum lines of the brick module on Jefferson with the corner brick module would be an improvement.

The Board would like to see two-dimensional elevations at the next meeting.

C-3 **<u>Human Scale</u>. The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve a good human scale.**

The Board agreed that the scale of the neighborhood to the south and east of the site should inform the massing of the building forms. The building should also read as a residential structure that is articulated to relate to the existing context and platting.

At the Initial Recommendation meeting, the Board did not discuss this issue further.

C-4 **<u>Exterior Finish Materials</u>. Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.**

The Board unanimously encouraged the use of high quality building materials for the proposed development. The material palette should be weightier and stronger to give a sense of permanence and grounding at this corner.

At the Initial Recommendation meeting, the Board discussed the color of the proposed brick and felt that the brick color and texture should have a warmer, richer hue. The Board was pleased with overall material palette.

D. Pedestrian Environment

D-2 **<u>Blank Walls.</u> Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable, they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.**

The Board was particularly concerned that the eastern portion of the north façade, adjacent to the bus stop should not be a blank wall; rather it should be activated with views to and from the building.

D-7 **<u>Personal Safety and Security.</u> Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.**

The Board agreed that the first floor along the street and alley facades should be well-lit.

D-8 **<u>Treatment of Alleys.</u> The design of alley entrances should enhance the pedestrian's street front.**

D-11 **<u>Commercial Transparency</u>. Commercial storefronts should be transparent, allowing for a direct visual connection between pedestrians on the sidewalk and the activities occurring on the interior of a building. Blank walls should be avoided.**

The Board noted that the design should create both transparency and good lighting along the street and alley sides of the site to activate and provide security at this location. The Board is supportive of the proposed tall retail spaces at the corner and along the street.

At the Initial Recommendation meeting, the Board expressed concern with the shadow box or window display box proposed along Jefferson, next to the bus stop. The Board wants to encourage this wall to be more active and provide visual interest. The Board would like to see details of the shadow box element shown on Jefferson and consider incorporating artwork into this feature to add activity and interest at street level.

E. Landscaping

E-2 **<u>Landscape to Enhance the Building and/or Site</u>. Landscaping including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.**

The Board looks forward to reviewing details of a well-programmed, detailed design for the open spaces integrated throughout the project, as well as sections and plans of the street level details. The Board expects to see significant and dramatic vegetation included in the common open spaces and at ground level.

At the Initial Recommendation meeting, the Board wanted to review more details of the Broadway right-of-way design and felt the presentation lacked specifics of the proposed streetscape enhancements. The Board wants to see details of the open spaces, specifically those at ground level. Include sections of the ground level between the building face and the curb and show landscaping, canopies, signage, dimensions, property lines, furniture, bus stop and other streetscape amenities.

E-3 **<u>Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions</u>. The landscape design should take advantage of the special on site conditions.**

The Board was very pleased with the proposed setback for wider sidewalk along Broadway and the landscape buffer along the alley.

See E-2

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

One departure from the development standards was proposed at this phase.

1. **Alley Setback (SMC 23.47A.014.B3):** The Codes requires a setback along the alley façade of 15' for portions of the structure over 13' in height to a maximum of 40' with an additional setback at the rate of 2' for every 10' of height exceeding 40'. The design proposal shows an encroachment into the setback above 40' by extending the plane of the wall upwards without stepping back.

   The entire building is set back seven feet from Broadway to accommodate the power line clearance. This condition creates a wider sidewalk and pedestrian area that is desirable on that edge, but pushes the building to the east to make up for the lost space. The proposed design shows a uniform setback at the third story that would allow a change in material to wrap the corner, enhancing the aesthetic of the building.

   The Board was not inclined towards entertaining this departure request given the additional height proposed, as well as the potential bulk and scale impacts to the neighborhood to the east.

NEXT STEPS

Second Recommendation Meeting:
The Board would like the applicant to develop the design to show:

1. Details of the open spaces, specifically those at ground level. Include sections of the ground level between the building face and the curb and show landscaping, canopies, signage, dimensions, property lines, furniture, bus stop and other streetscape amenities.
2. Exploration of the design and material selection of the overhead canopies along Broadway.
3. Two-dimensional elevations (not in perspective).
4. Simplify fenestration.
5. Simplify the brick module along Broadway. Continue the spandrel lines established by the corner bay. Explore the asymmetry of the brick module.
6. Differentiate the vertical notch along Broadway with different parapet.
7. Show a brick color and texture that has richer hue.
8. Details of the shadow box element shown on Jefferson, consider incorporating artwork into this feature to add activity and interest at street level.
9. Focus on continuous application of datum lines.
10. Alignment of the datum lines of the brick module on Jefferson with corner brick module.