



City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development

D.M. Sugimura, Director

**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE PRIORITIES
OF THE
CAPITOL/FIRST HILL/CENTRAL AREA DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

Project Number: 3011010

Address: 1501 E. Madison Street

Meeting date: March 17, 2010
Report date: April 2, 2010

Applicant: Margaret Sprug, Miller Hull Architects for Point 32

Board members present: Evan Bourquard
Dan Foltz
Wolf Saar
Sharon Sutton, Chair

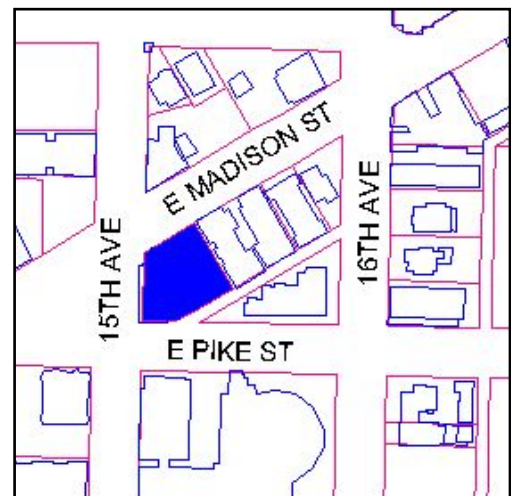
Board members absent: Lisa Picard

DPD staff present: Lisa Rutzick, Land Use Planner
Jess Harris, Green Permitting Lead

SITE & VICINITY

The site is located in the Capitol Hill neighborhood and lies within the Capitol Hill Urban Center Village at the intersection of 15th Avenue, East Madison Street and East Pike Street. The site slopes approximately nine feet upward to the east. The 10,000 square foot site includes one existing one-story commercial building and surface parking. Across 15th Avenue to the west, is a tree-lined triangular shaped block that contains a raised triangular shaped public park space.

The site is zoned Neighborhood Commercial 3 (NC3-65).



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This same designation extends to the north, west and east of the subject site. Across the alley to the south, the zone changes to Lowrise 3 (L3). Well served by transit, the area comprises a mix of commercial and multi-family residential structures.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a six-story 49,000 sq. ft. office and retail building. Four flex car parking spaces will be provided within the structure. The existing structure is to be demolished. Project is participating in the Living Building Challenge Demonstration Program. Access to the parking is from the alley.

DESIGN PRESENTATION

The first half of the presentation focused on explaining the Living Building Challenge program and how the proposed development is anticipating meeting the goals of the Living Building Challenge and associated Living Building Ordinance (C.B. 116740) recently passed by City Council as a pilot program. The Living Building Challenge requires meeting 20 “*Imperatives*” with seven organizing “*Petals*”. The seven Petals are: responsible site selection, net zero water, net zero energy, health, materials, equity and beauty.

The second half of the presentation included an analysis of the neighborhood context, site, design considerations and conceptual design massing diagrams. The applicants presented three options for developing the property. The first alternative (Concept 1) showed a code-compliant building form situated directly at the property line without setbacks provided (none are required in the Neighborhood Commercial zone). This concept includes a central interior light well and the main pedestrian entrance off of 15th Avenue. The applicant noted that the proposed design was not feasible to meet the Living Building Challenge Energy Petal with this design.

The second alternative (Concept 2) included an enclosed central atrium opening to the 15th Avenue front, and a five-foot setback from the eastern property line with a ten-foot setback on a portion that includes glazing. The building core functions would be consolidated at the east side of the building. The PV canopy was shown at sufficient size to capture the needed area, but represented other limitations in reaching the Living Building Challenge.

The third and preferred alternative (Concept 3) included a terrace form where the base level is built out to the property lines and the upper levels are set back 15 feet on the north and south sides. This scheme included two main entrances: a triangular shaped entry plaza off 15th Avenue and an entry stair feature off of Madison Street. The stair is intended to be welcoming and gracious and encourage the use of stairs instead of the elevator. A vertical greenhouse is included in the southeast portion of the building and the photovoltaic (PV) panels are proposed to extend over the roof and run vertically down the south facade. At the southwest corner,

decks are shown projecting over the ROW and under the PV overhang. Several departures from the Commercial Code and the Living Building Ordinance are requested as part of this scheme.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

On March 4, 2010 the applicant presented the project to the Living Building Technical Advisory Group (LBTAG) in an effort to receive feedback prior to the Early Design Guidance meeting. The LBTAG comments were provided to the applicant and the Design Review Board prior to the Early Design Guidance meeting and are available in the Master Use Permit project file at DPD.

Approximately 65 members of the public attended the Early Design Guidance meeting. The following comments were offered:

- o Interested in the integration of solar modules and using those fabricated by local builders.
- o Noted that the west facing windows of the adjacent building are functioning as the passive solar collectors for that building and that the proposed structure will block the solar access to this building.
- o Concerned that future development to the south may impact the solar access of the subject site.
- o Concerned that the proposed development does not address pedestrian safety, streetscape compatibility or respecting adjacent properties. The height of the proposed building is larger than what was proposed to the community group. Does not understand need for taller floor-to-floor ceiling heights. Feels terrace space should be decreased. The building and streetscape need to be addressed. The proposed stair feature does not need to extend into the right-of-way (ROW).
- o Project should address the parking needs of the neighborhood. The proposed structure is out of proportion in the neighborhood and should be smaller.
- o Felt this is an exciting project and the proposed uses would be a nice addition to the neighborhood. The appearance of the vertical solar panels needs careful consideration. Feels proposed building size should fit in within the neighborhood context. Would like to see more the historical character of the neighborhood integrated into or acknowledged by the design.
- o Applauds the effort put into the proposed development thus far. Unable to delineate the proposed PV panel overhang in the ROW on the plans and would like to see this distinction more clearly. The entry points to the building are critical and should more clearly contribute to the streetscape.
- o The Biophilia and Social Justice *petals* of the Living Building Challenge need to be further examined for the proposed project.
- o Felt this is a fantastic project and would be a wonderful addition to neighborhood.
- o Would like to see 15th Avenue closed off between the subject site and McGilvra Place.
- o Would like the proposed structure to be lowered to allow more sunlight to the abutting building. Concerned about increased shading of nearby properties.
- o Advised that the interior walls be soundproofed for the future tenants.

- Encouraged by the architectural statement of the building. Would like to see park more activated. Advocated that the alley to the south is charming and should be kept in tact.

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 from the City of Seattle's *Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings* and the *Capitol Hill Neighborhood Specific Guidelines* of highest priority to this project.

A. Site Planning

A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics. The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- *Retain or increase the width of sidewalks.*
- *Provide street trees with tree grates or in planter strips, using appropriate species to provide summer shade, winter light, and year-round visual interest.*
- *Vehicle entrances to buildings should not dominate the streetscape.*
- *Orient townhouse structures to provide pedestrian entrances to the sidewalk.*
- *For buildings that span a block and "front" on two streets, each street frontage should receive individual and detailed site planning and architectural design treatments to complement the established streetscape character.*
- *New development in commercial zones should be sensitive to neighboring residential zones. Examples include lots on Broadway that extend to streets with residential character, such as Nagle Place or 10th or Harvard Avenues East. While a design with a commercial character is appropriate along Broadway, compatibility with residential character should be emphasized along the other streets.*

The Board expressed much interest in the relationship between the proposed development and the park across the street to the west. The Board agreed that the open space at ground level was preferable in Option 2 in terms of the relation to the park. The entry along 15th appears more welcoming due to the proximity to the park. Option 3 diffuses the energy of a single entry focal point with the proposal of two principal entries. See D-1. The Board noted that the design of each side of the building must respond to the unique characteristics of the context on each side.

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- *Provide for sidewalk retail opportunities and connections by allowing for the opening of the storefront to the street and displaying goods to the pedestrian.*
- *Provide for outdoor eating and drinking opportunities on the sidewalk by allowing for the opening the restaurant or café windows to the sidewalk and installing outdoor seating while maintaining pedestrian flow.*
- *Install clear glass windows along the sidewalk to provide visual access into the retail or dining activities that occur inside. Do not block views into the interior spaces with the backs of shelving units or with posters.*

The Board agreed that the stair feature proposed along Madison Street will require very specific treatment in order to give it the prominence and use that is intended. At the next meeting, the Board would like to better understand what will make this stair element an exceptional design. If the stair is proposed to be cantilevered over the sidewalk, the design should be extraordinary; otherwise such a projection is not compelling.

The Board reminded that the building needs to contribute to pedestrian experience, while being a Living Building. As such, access to the commercial uses at the ground floor should be clear and promote interaction.

A-10 Corner Lots. Building on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- *Incorporate residential entries and special landscaping into corner lots by setting the structure back from the property lines.*
- *Provide for a prominent retail corner entry.*

The Board will continue to be interested in the shadow impacts from the proposed massing on neighboring properties. The Board acknowledges that both the building corners located at intersection should be acutely addressed as both are important, but distinct edges.

B. Height, Bulk, and Scale
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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 nearby, 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 on the adjacent zones.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- *Break up building mass by incorporating different façade treatments to give the impression of multiple, small-scale buildings, in keeping with the established development pattern.*

- *Consider existing views to downtown Seattle, the Space Needle, Elliott Bay and the Olympic Mountains, and incorporate site and building design features that may help to preserve those views from public rights-of-way.*
- *Design new buildings to maximize the amount of sunshine on adjacent sidewalks throughout the year.*

The Board noted that the mass of the structure proposed under the preferred option should be located along Madison and relieve the massing to the south by shifting the bulk from the south side and opening up more of a form transition down to the Lowrise zone. The Board agreed that the options were fairly similar and should have shown more variety. The Board also agreed that the PV overhang and vertical PV wall shown in the preferred scheme raises critical issues with regard to blank walls, bulk and massing. The extension of the PV panels into the ROW creates a far larger sense of building mass that should strive to minimize its presence over the ROW and on the eastern side. The Board also noted the building mass should follow the setback pattern established along Madison.

C. Architectural Elements

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.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- *Incorporate signage that is consistent with the existing or intended character of the building and the neighborhood.*
- *Solid canopies or fabric awnings over the sidewalk are preferred.*
- *Avoid using vinyl awnings that also serve as big, illuminated signs.*
- *Use materials and design that is compatible with the structures in the vicinity if those represent the desired neighborhood character.*

The Board looks forward to seeing the details of how the PV panels fit together and how they will be integrated with the rest of the building design, particularly the underside of the PV and the vertical PV array on the south side. The Board agreed that the greenhouse feature is too tucked away in the southeast corner and should be more prominent.

The Board would like to have visibility of mechanical equipment included as part of the education experience of the Living Building.

The Board is interested in understanding what the building looks like at night.

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- *Incorporate building entry treatments that are arched or framed in a manner that welcomes people and protects them from the elements and emphasizes the building's architecture.*
- *Improve and support pedestrian-orientation by using components such as: non-reflective storefront windows and transoms; pedestrian-scaled awnings; architectural detailing on the first floor; and detailing at the roof line.*

The Board agreed that activation of both the Madison and 15th Avenue streetscape is desirable. The relationship of the commercial and retail spaces, as well as the entry points to the sidewalk are a critical consideration. The Board looks forward to seeing greater details of this relationship.

C-4 Exterior Finish Materials. 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.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Use wood shingles or board and batten siding on residential structures.
- Avoid wood or metal siding materials on commercial structures.
- Provide operable windows, especially on storefronts.
- Use materials that are consistent with the existing or intended neighborhood character, including brick, cast stone, architectural stone, terracotta details, and concrete that incorporates texture and color.
- Consider each building as a high-quality, long term addition to the neighborhood; exterior design and materials should exhibit permanence and quality appropriate to the Capitol Hill neighborhood.
- The use of applied foam ornamentation and EIFS (Exterior Insulation & Finish System) is discouraged, especially on ground level locations.

The Board strongly agreed that much more detail regarding the vertical PV array is necessary. What this array looks like to neighbors and pedestrians is crucial. The design of this array should be mindful of glare and blank wall effects. The Board noted a concern for the portion of the array that projects over the sidewalk and agreed that this feature should feel light and elegant, not heavy and oppressive. The Board was also concerned that the proposed deck projection at the southwest corner was a dominating feature over the public space and did not see either a design or Living Building Challenge imperative for such a projection. The Board wants to see further exploration of the PV arrays that will result in a less dominating element.

D. Pedestrian Environment

D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances. Convenient and attractive access to the building entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from weather.

Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- **Provide entryways that link the building to the surrounding landscape.**
- **Create open spaces at street level that link to the open space of the sidewalk.**
- **Building entrances should emphasize pedestrian ingress and egress as opposed to accommodating vehicles.**
- **Minimize the number of residential entrances on commercial streets where non-residential uses are required. Where residential entries and lobbies on commercial streets are unavoidable, minimize their impact to the retail vitality commercial streetscape.**

The Board expressed concern that the pedestrian environment appeared too oppressive and need to be further integrated into the ground floor of the building, and include wider sidewalks (greater than ten feet) and planting strips. The Board feels that two main entries into the building proposed under the preferred option are less desirable than one main entry; therefore, the Board wants the design to create a strong entry feature at both locations. The architecture of the building should encourage interaction between the pedestrian and the ground floor uses with operable windows, views to and from the sidewalk and the interior uses and other pedestrian design features. The Board also indicated strong support for a crosswalk to be located at the corner of 15th Avenue and extend across Madison Street.

The Board encouraged the location of the entry area on 15th Avenue to maximize the spatial and visual relationship with McGilvra Place. The Board was less enthusiastic about and questioned the proposed secondary entrance off Madison Street. This secondary entry would require a dimensional departure to have the stair overhang the sidewalk above the first floor. These concerns were alleviated by the explanation that the need to discourage energy usage of the elevator favored a grand entry stair location at the highest point of the site off Madison Street. The stair design would also include interactive graphics or other informational displays regarding energy usage at the building.

The Board also encouraged the design to acknowledge the history of the site and neighborhood by incorporating reference(s) into the architecture, pedestrian environment, landscape design and/or educational information provided within the building.

D-2 Blank Walls. 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 raised concerns that the PV array that extends over the building and then downwards (the “mud flap”) along the southern vertical elevation must be eliminated or at least reduced in scale to alleviate the sense of a looming, blank wall.

See B-1.

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Consider:
 - pedestrian-scale lighting, but prevent light spillover onto adjacent properties
 - architectural lighting to complement the architecture of the structure
 - transparent windows allowing views into and out of the structure—thus incorporating the “eyes on the street” design approach
- Provide a clear distinction between pedestrian traffic areas and commercial traffic areas through the use of different paving materials or colors, landscaping, etc.

D-8 Treatment of Alleys. The design of alley entrances should enhance the pedestrian street front.

The Board supported the intent to preserve the existing alley paving materials and looks forward to seeing how the design integrates the new development with this old, brick alley.

E. Landscaping

E-1 Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites. Where possible, special consideration should be given to abutting streetscape and neighboring properties.

The Board discussed at length and encouraged the possibility of relating the building design, if not actual function to the park across the street to the west.

E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site. 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 is concerned that there minimal is outdoor space proposed for building tenants. Such spaces should be located away from Madison, the busiest, noisiest side of the site with the least solar access. The Board was not supportive of the proposed deck at the southwest corner.

The Board was concerned with the proposed location of the greenhouse feature. Such a program should seek to engage the public and be treated as a visual amenity to the pedestrian. The Board suggested shifting the greenhouse to a more visible, prominent location where it can be better appreciated or show how this feature would have prominence at the current location.

E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions. The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- **Maintain or enhance the character and aesthetic qualities of neighborhood development to provide for consistent streetscape character along a corridor.**
- **Supplement and complement existing mature street trees where feasible.**
- **Incorporate street trees in both commercial and residential environments in addition to trees onsite.**
- **Commercial landscape treatments that include street trees.**

The Board is concerned about the relationship to the residential building to the east and would like to see plans to create an attractive buffer between the two structures. This buffer should consider views to and from the abutting buildings to maintain privacy, daylight, landscaping, form and materials. See also, B-1, C-4, D-2 and D-7.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

Several departures from the development standards are proposed at this time. The Board's recommendation on the requested departures will be reserved until the Final Recommendation meeting and will be based upon the departure's potential to help the project better meet the Living Building Challenge objectives, these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure.

Living Building Departures:

1. FLOOR AREA RATIO (SMC 23.40.060.D.2d).

An FAR departure was not requested at this time, however, there is a possibility that it will be requested in case it is discovered through future design efforts that additional space is needed for mechanical equipment.

2. STRUCTURE HEIGHT (SMC 23.40.060.d.2e).

A height departure is sought for up to 10 additional feet above the base height of the commercial zone (65'). The additional floor-to-floor height is desired to meet the day lighting requirements for the Living Building Challenge. Further analysis must occur regarding access to the roof by the Fire Department, and it needs to be determined whether providing an access element to the roof would require a departure.

This departure would allow the upper floors to have a 13'6" floor-to-floor height instead of the more typical 11'6" in order to provide sufficient day lighting. A height departure is required as a result of the additional 2 feet on each floor and the additional height significantly improves the penetration of daylight. More information about how the preferred option meets the natural ventilation requirements of the living building challenge is necessary.

The Board indicated that they would support such a departure provided that the increased height results in meeting or exceeding the day lighting requirements and successful height, bulk

and scale transition to structures to the east and southeast. The Board also wants to see further exploration of the vertical PV panel array and how the appearance of this element is treated per their guidance above.

3. ALLEY WIDTH (SMC 23.53.030).

The proposed design would like to maintain the current alley width of 16 feet, while a two-foot dedication to widen the alleyway is required under the Land Use Code. Under the Living Building Ordinance, modifications to the required width of streets and alleys may be handled as a departure or through the administrative review that occurs for other projects.

The Board agreed that the historic character of the alleyway, the build out of the limited number of properties served by the alleyway and the unique alley condition at this intersection with East Pike Street warrant maintaining the existing alley width and would be inclined to support such a departure request (unless it is otherwise granted through an administrative review). However, rationale about how a two-foot alley dedication would prevent meeting the living building challenge goals is necessary in order to grant this departure.

Commercial Code Departures:

4. STREET LEVEL COMMERCIAL HEIGHT (SMC 23.47A.008).

A departure from the 13 foot floor-to-floor- height at street level commercial height is proposed due to the slope along East Madison Street. Less than 50% of the frontage would have an 11-12 foot floor-to-floor height due to the site slope. However, there will be extra floor-to-floor space on 15th Avenue and the average will approximate the 13 foot standard.

The Board noted that they might support such a departure provided that the ground level design is well considered and details to encourage interaction with the pedestrian environment.

5. STRUCTURAL BUILDING OVERHANGS (SMC 23.53.035).

A departure is needed from the dimensional standards for structural building overhangs for the stair on East Madison. That stair is meant to be an engaging, exciting design element that tells the story of the building. Also, on the south side, the balconies beneath the PV array are 20-feet deep and require a dimensional exception from structural building overhang requirements.

The Board did not indicate support for the deck overhang at southwest corner; however they would entertain the stair projection off of Madison provided that the entrance point is clear, grand and welcoming.

NEXT STEPS

MUP Application:

1. Submit application for Master Use Permit (MUP) application. Please call Lisa Rutzick (at 206-386-9049) when you have scheduled your MUP intake appointment.
2. Please include a written response to the guidance provided in this EDG. Plan on embedding four colored and shadowed elevations, landscape and right-of-way improvement plans and three-dimensional street level vignettes into the MUP plan set (four 11x17 images per sheet). Label sheets DR-1, 2.

Recommendation Meeting:

The Board would like to review the following:

3. Details of the stair feature located off of Madison Street.
4. Details of the street level floor and relationship to the sidewalk for all building elevations.
5. Details of the space between the proposed structure and the residential structure to the east.
6. Details of the greenhouse feature.
7. Shadow and solar access studies showing the effects of the proposed building mass on the west façade of the neighboring structure to the east.
8. View studies accompanying any departure requests, such as showing code compliant schemes.
9. Details of the open spaces, specifically any proposed greenhouse, entry areas and along the right-of-way. Include ground level sketches.
10. Details of the storage and collection program for garbage and recycling containers.
11. A detailed material and color board with actual samples.
12. A conceptual lighting plan.
13. All elevations of all buildings (colored and shadowed).