



## SECOND EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

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Project Number: 3012649

Address: 1601 9th Ave.

Applicant: Runberg Architecture for Teutsch Partners

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, January 24, 2012

Board Members Present: Gabe Grant (Chair)  
Matthew Albores  
Pragnesh Parikh  
Brian Scott

Board Members Absent: Gundula Proksch

DPD Staff Present: Scott Kemp

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### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: DOC2 500-300-500



Current Development: Surface parking adjacent to Camlin Hotel. The Bus/Light Rail Tunnel crosses under the site from east to west underlying 60% of the proposal site.

Access: 9th Ave., Pine St. and alley

Surrounding Development: Adjacent to the Historic Landmark Camlin Hotel. Across 9th Ave. to the east is the Convention Place Transit Center which may someday be topped with development. Elsewhere in the immediate area new residential and office towers are replacing much lower scale development.

ECAs: None

Neighborhood Character: Downtown mixed use, high-rise and mid-rise.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is designed as a “bridge” across the underground bus and light rail tunnel eliminating the ability to provide below grade parking. The applicants propose a mixed use residential project with five floors of Type-V residential use over two floors of Type0I construction to include retail, lobby/tenant amenity space and parking. The building might contain 74-80 residential units, 3,000 sq. ft. of retail facing Pine St. and parking for 36 cars.

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## DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Three alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options include the mix of uses described above in a lot line to lot line building with parking above grade and within the structure. In each a steel frame element is incorporated to aid in bridging the underground tunnel.

The first scheme (Option A) showed Incorporated alley access to parking and, like the second alternative scheme, would require a departures to allow a parking use along a green street, reduction of upper level setbacks from a green street and alternative dimensioning of structural building overhangs.

The second scheme (Option B) showed a curb cut off 9th Ave. necessitating an additional departure request for a curb cut on a green street.

The third scheme (Option C) showed alley vehicular access and upper level setback along 9th Ave. and would require a single departure; for parking at street level along a green street.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Approximately four members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Noted that indicated that creative treatment should be applied to any blank wall element along 9th Ave.
- Stated that an expansion of the Washington State Convention Center may take place in the air space above the transit station across 9th Ave. from the project site and that this eventuality will add to the urban density surrounding the site.
- Encouraged the proposed building to add to the existing architectural diversity of the surrounding area which contains both new buildings and grand historic ones.

## **PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS**

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. The Board identified the Downtown Design Guidelines of highest priority for this project.

The Downtown guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

### **A. Site Planning & Massing**

#### ***Responding to the Larger Context***

##### **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 board indicated the façade design approach should be simple and elegant. Of the precedent images shown in the packet (p. 41) the one second from left in the bottom row was noted as showing a good relationship to a historic building. Also noted was the Agnes Lofts, particularly the way its front façade turns the corner for a distance.

## **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.**

The Board discussed the massing of the preferred alternative. One member found it a bit boxy. It was observed that the building could maintain the Camlin façade line. A bay coming out right next to the Camlin appeared to crowd it. The bay it was stated could be shifted and it would be OK for it to be longer, even if a departure were required. The façade could be notched and, the Board indicated, the façade needs to be developed further. The Board indicated that the massing was generally acceptable with three members indicating that some “backing off from the Camlin” needs to be incorporated into the design.

## **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.**

- C-3 Provide Active—Not Blank—Facades. Buildings should not have large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks.**

All four Board members were concerned about the pedestrian experience along 9<sup>th</sup> Ave. where parking is proposed within the structure, without an intervening use for approximately 55 feet. Trading the pedestrian experience for parking, it stated, does “not ring true.” While the Board did not indicate that the parking arrangement was unacceptable, it did indicate that obtaining a recommendation of a departure to allow it would be a challenge. It indicated that an option incorporating a human activated use, visible and interacting with the pedestrian experience in at least a good portion of the façade should be developed and shown to the Board the next time it reviews this proposal. Any alternative treatment of the area should involve extraordinary materials, art, landscape and textures.

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

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

<b>D. Public Amenities</b>
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*Enhancing the Streetscape & Open Space*

- D-1 **Provide Inviting & Usable Open Space.** Design public open spaces to promote a visually pleasing, safe, and active environment for workers, residents, and visitors. Views and solar access from the principal area of the open space should be especially emphasized.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

## **E. Vehicular Access & Parking**

### *Minimizing the Adverse Impacts*

- E-1 Minimize Curb Cut Impacts. Minimize adverse impacts of curb cuts on the safety and comfort of pedestrians.**
  
- E-2 Integrate Parking Facilities. Minimize the visual impact of parking by integrating parking facilities with surrounding development. Incorporate architectural treatments or suitable landscaping to provide for the safety and comfort of people using the facility as well as those walking by.**
  
- 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.**

### **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based upon the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure(s). The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

The Board did not rule out any of the departures indicated a being requested. It did indicate the one to allow parking along a green street façade would raise a high bar in terms of measures to protect and enhance the pedestrian experience. It also indicated an additional departure for an alternative bay window design could be considered.

### **BOARD DIRECTION**

**At the conclusion of the EDG meeting, the Board recommended the project should move forwards to MUP Application in response to the guidance provided at this meeting.**