



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012542

Address: 2217 3rd Avenue

Applicant: Dawn Bushnaq

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Board Members Present: Gabe Grant (Chair)
Brian Scott
Sheri Olson

Board Members Absent: Matt Albores
Pragnesh Parikh

DPD Staff Present: Shelley Bolser, substituting for Lisa Rutzick

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: DMR/R 65/125

Nearby Zones: (North) DMR/R 65/125
(South) DMR/R 85/65
(East) DMR/R 65/125
(West) DMR/R 65/125

Lot Area: 6,480 square feet



Current Development: The site is currently vacant, occasionally used by a mobile food vendor. The previous building at this site was constructed in 1949 and demolished in 2007.

Access: There is a small concrete parking area near the south property line, accessed from the alley.

Surrounding Development: The 250' tall Grandview condominium building is located adjacent to the south property line. Lower two to four story buildings are located to the north and across the alley. A mix of developments is located to the east across Third Ave (one to nine-story buildings and surface parking).

ECAs: There are no mapped Environmentally Critical Areas at the site.

Neighborhood Character: This area of Belltown includes identified "icon buildings." There is one of these icon buildings located across 3rd Avenue from the site (Cornelius Apartments). The area includes good access to transit, a mix of vibrant and eclectic uses, and a variety of building types. Early 20th century buildings tend to range from approximately 4-9 stories and include regular symmetrical patterns with masonry or stone facades and punched windows. Mid-20th century buildings tend to be lower in height, with larger windows and more irregular facade treatments. Late 20th century and early 21st century buildings tend to be much taller (up to 250' tall) towers, some built on a podium of garage levels above the street level retail.

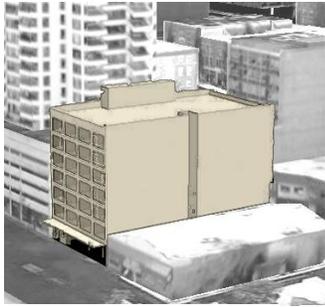
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed development is a 7-story mixed-use building with 3,100 square feet of retail at the street level and up to 49 residential units above. No residential vehicle parking is proposed, consistent with the Land Use Code requirements in this zone. Three car-share spaces are proposed at the alley and 50 bicycle parking spaces are proposed below grade. Outdoor amenity space would be located at the roof.

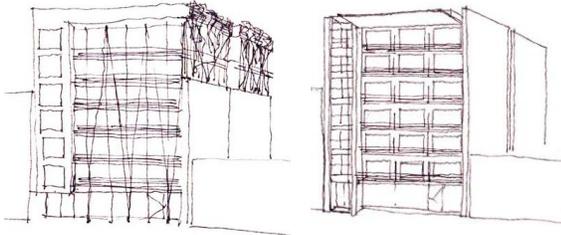
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DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Three alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options include a 7-story mixed-use residential and retail building, covering most of the site, with 3 car-share parking spaces and bicycle parking spaces. 3,100 square feet of retail space was shown at the street level, with 50 bicycle parking spaces below grade. The zoning at this site allows residential buildings up to 125' tall (approximately 12-13 stories) and no vehicle parking is required. The potential construction type may be modular.



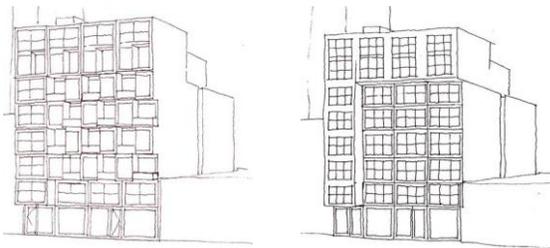
The first scheme (Alternate 1) showed a 70' tall building with 3,100 square feet of retail at the ground floor, residential units above, and outdoor amenity space at the roof. The residential units were shown as long and narrow and accessed from a double loaded corridor, with the narrow side of the unit facing the street or alley. Preliminary sketches of the street facing façade showed a regular pattern of fenestration and material, with a vertically expressed building bay on one side of the façade. This option included 48 residential units and 1,600 square feet of residential open space.



The second scheme (Alternate 2) showed an 80' tall building with a similar configuration as



Alternate 1 in levels one through six. At level 7, the units were loaded around a U-shaped corridor with residential open space at the north edge and northwest corner. This configuration allowed some modulation at the south edge, individual residential open spaces at the north side, and shared residential open space at the northwest corner. Two preliminary sketches showed possible façade treatments, with differences in fenestration and balcony location. One sketch

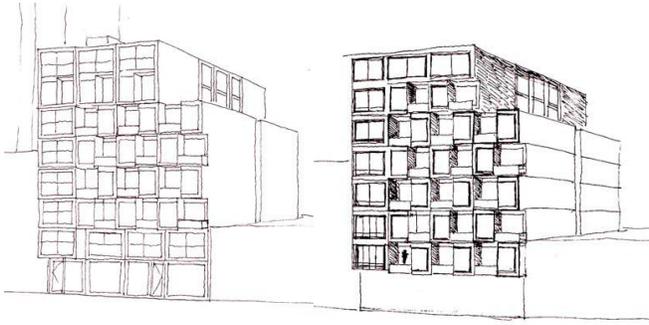


showed alternating setbacks that corresponded to different building modules. This option included 49 residential units and 975 square feet of residential open space.



The third scheme (Alternate 3) showed an 80' tall building with a similar configuration as Alternate 1 in levels one through six. A change from Alternate 1 included small balconies at levels 3 through 6. At level 7, the units were loaded around a U-shaped corridor with residential open space at the north edge. This configuration allowed some modulation at the south edge, individual residential open spaces at the north side, and shared residential open space along the north edge. The street and alley-facing facades reflected this change, with the top floors of the building aligned to the south property line and a step back from the north property line.

Two preliminary sketches showed possible façade treatments, with possible differences in fenestration and changing the planes of the façade, where some areas protrude and others recess. The two ideas showed a regular fenestration pattern and a more random pattern, with corresponding changes in the façade plane. This option included 49 residential units and 975 square feet of residential open space.



The applicant also presented street level landscaping and ground floor use alternatives. The possibility of reducing retail space to provide some parking spaces was shown. The retail was shown at the property line, or possibly with a setback from the property line. The residential entry was shown in two possible locations, as a response to the bus stop on 3rd Ave. The possibility of grouping street trees and planting strips, or separating these areas with pavement, was also shown.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

- How does the proposed building relate to condo units in the Grandview?
 - The applicant responded that 35' of the proposed building would extend above the garage levels of the Grandview. The north-facing units at the Grandview would be adjacent to the proposed building for approximately 3-4 stories. Alternatives 2 and 3 include possible modulation and green walls to present a well-designed building face to the Grandview units.
- Concern that the proposed building would block residential windows of the Grandview units.

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 Development Design Guidelines & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

The Neighborhood specific 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.**

Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:

- A. Develop the architectural concept and arrange the building mass to enhance views. This includes views of the water and mountains, and noteworthy structures such as the Space Needle;**
- B. The architecture and building mass should respond to sites having nonstandard shapes. There are several changes in the street grid alignment in Belltown, resulting in triangular sites and chamfered corners. Examples of this include: 1st, Western and Elliott between Battery and Lenora, and along Denny;**
- C. The topography of the neighborhood lends to its unique character. Design buildings to take advantage of this condition as an opportunity, rather than a constraint. Along the streets, single entry, blank facades are discouraged. Consider providing multiple entries and windows at street level on sloping streets.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the nearby context of the site, which offers few positive examples of architectural style or street level activation. The proposed development should set a new precedent for these items, as described further in response to Guidelines B-1 and B-4.

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.**

Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:

Belltown has a rich architectural context, with a wide variety of architectural styles represented within the neighborhood. Contemporary methods of building can potentially create visual conflicts with older buildings due to differences in scale, massing, and degrees of articulation. Sometimes new buildings add exteriors that mimic past architectural styles, creating a sense of unauthentic design. These guidelines emphasize the concept of historical continuity, or in other words, the

relationship of structures over time. This relationship encourages diversity within a coherent whole, reinforcing the unique and evolving character of Belltown.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board directed the applicant to design the proposed development to create a new positive context of street level activation and architectural style.

- B-2 Create a Transition in Bulk & Scale. Compose the massing of the building to create a transition to the height, bulk, and scale of development in neighboring or nearby less intensive zones.**

Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:

New high-rise and half- to full-block developments are juxtaposed with older and smaller scale buildings throughout the neighborhood. Many methods to reduce the apparent scale of new developments through contextually responsive design are identified in other guidelines (e.g., *B-1: Respond to the neighborhood context* and *B-3: Reinforce the positive urban form & architectural attributes of the immediate area*). The objective of this guideline is to discourage overly massive, bulky or unmodulated structures that are unsympathetic to the surrounding context.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board acknowledged that the proposal is well below the maximum building height allowed in this zone. Creating a transition in bulk and scale is therefore not a highest priority for this proposal, but the proposed development should present a sensitively designed façade to the condominium units to the south. The south-facing façade could include rooftop open space to achieve this transition. Other methods to create a sensitive transition include modulation, green walls, interesting façade treatments, and light colored facades to reflect light between the buildings.

- B-3 Reinforce the Positive Urban Form & Architectural Attributes of the Immediate Area . Consider the predominant attributes of the immediate neighborhood and reinforce desirable siting patterns, massing arrangements, and streetscape characteristics of nearby development.**

Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:

The principal objective of this guideline is to promote scale and character compatibility through reinforcement of the desirable patterns of massing and facade composition found in the surrounding area. Pay particular attention to designated landmarks and other noteworthy buildings.

- A. Respond to the regulating lines and rhythms of adjacent buildings that also support a street-level environment; regulating lines and rhythms include vertical and horizontal**

patterns as expressed by cornice lines, belt lines, doors, windows, structural bays and modulation.

- B. Use regulating lines to promote contextual harmony, solidify the relationship between new and old buildings, and lead the eye down the street.
- C. Pay attention to excellent fenestration patterns and detailing in the vicinity. The use of recessed windows that create shadow lines, and suggest solidity, is encouraged.

Early Design Guidance comments reflect those in response to Guideline B-1.

- B-4 Design a Well-Proportioned & Unified Building. Compose the massing and organize the publicly accessible interior and exterior spaces to create a well-proportioned building that exhibits a coherent architectural concept. Design the architectural elements and finish details to create a unified building, so that all components appear integral to the whole.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the appearance of the street-facing façade for Alternate 3. The upper level units were shown stepped back from the north property line, and the Board felt that this didn't contribute to a well-proportioned street facing façade. The Board suggested reorganizing the upper level floor plan to create a consistent street-facing façade, similar to Alternate 2. Overall, the Board was supportive of the preferred Alternate 3 with this modification.

The Board expressed appreciation for the preliminary façade sketches for Alternate 3 and they looked forward to seeing more detail at the Recommendation stage. The Board directed the applicant to design the variations in the façade to provide real physical depth and variation within the modules, and use different colors or materials to express the variations. The challenge will be to use colors/materials/shapes to create a unified design across the modules.

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.**

Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:

- A. reinforce existing retail concentrations;
- B. vary in size, width, and depth of commercial spaces, accommodating for smaller businesses, where feasible;

- C. incorporate the following elements in the adjacent public realm and in open spaces around the building: unique hardscape treatments, pedestrian-scale sidewalk lighting, accent paving (especially at corners, entries and passageways), creative landscape treatments (planting, planters, trellises, arbors), seating, gathering spaces, water features, inclusion of art elements
- D. **Building/Site Corners:** Building corners are places of convergence. The following considerations help reinforce site and building corners: provide meaningful setbacks/open space, if feasible, provide seating as gathering spaces, incorporate street/pedestrian amenities in these spaces, make these spaces safe (good visibility), and iconic corner identifiers to create wayfinders that draw people to the site.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board appreciated the proposed street level retail and the anticipated small walk-up vendor space. The street level retail spaces should be constructed to enhance the anticipated nature of the retail establishments.

- C-2 **Design Facades of Many Scales.** Design architectural features, fenestration patterns, and materials compositions that refer to the scale of human activities contained within. Building facades should be composed of elements scaled to promote pedestrian comfort, safety, and orientation.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, in addition to the guidance in response to B-4, the Board also directed the applicant to create a human scaled façade at a finer grain than nearby development. The adjacent above-grade condominium garage is an example of inhuman scale at street-facing facades. The proposed development should include a scale that is closer to the nearby icon buildings in the Belltown area.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board directed the applicant to provide a visually interesting façade at the north property line, where the wall will be visible above the one-story adjacent building.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that they look forward to seeing more information about the design of the entries at the Recommendation stage.

- 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.**

Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:

Overhead weather protection should be designed with consideration given to:

- A. the overall architectural concept of the building (as described in Guideline B-4);**
- B. uses occurring within the building (such as entries and retail spaces) or in the adjacent streetscape environment (such as bus stops and intersections);**
- C. minimizing gaps in coverage;**
- D. a drainage strategy that keeps rain water off the street-level facade and sidewalk;**
- E. continuity with weather protection provided on nearby buildings;**
- F. relationship to architectural features and elements on adjacent development, especially if abutting a building of historic or noteworthy character;**
- G. the scale of the space defined by the height and depth of the weather protection;**
- H. use of translucent or transparent covering material to maintain a pleasant sidewalk environment with plenty of natural light; and**
- I. when opaque material is used, the illumination of light-colored undersides to increase security after dark.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that they look forward to seeing more information about the design of this item at the Recommendation stage.

- 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.**

Belltown-specific supplemental guidance: Considerations

Spaces for service and utilities:

- A. Services and utilities, while essential to urban development, should be screened or otherwise hidden from the view of the pedestrian.**
- B. Exterior trash receptacles should be screened on three sides, with a gate on the fourth side that also screens the receptacles from view. Provide a niche to recess the receptacle.**
- C. Screen loading docks and truck parking from public view using building massing, architectural elements and/or landscaping.**
- D. Ensure that all utility equipment is located, sized, and designed to be as inconspicuous as possible. Consider ways to reduce the noise impacts of HVAC equipment on the alley environment.**

Pedestrian environment:

- E. Pedestrian circulation is an integral part of the site layout. Where possible and feasible, provide elements, such as landscaping and special paving, that help define a pedestrian-friendly environment in the alley.**

- F. Create a comfortably scaled and thoughtfully detailed urban environment in the alley through the use of well-designed architectural forms and details, particularly at street level.

Architectural concept:

- G. In designing a well-proportioned and unified building, the alley façade should not be ignored. An alley façade should be treated with form, scale and materials similar to rest of the building to create a coherent architectural concept.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that they look forward to seeing more information about the design of this item at the Recommendation stage.

D. Public Amenities

Enhancing the Streetscape & Open Space

- 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.

Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:

Landscape enhancement of the site may include some of the approaches or features listed below, where appropriate:

- A. emphasize entries with special planting in conjunction with decorative paving and/or lighting;
- B. use landscaping to make plazas and courtyards comfortable for human activity and social interaction;
- C. distinctively landscape open areas created by building modulation, such as entry courtyards;
- D. provide year-round greenery - drought tolerant species are encouraged to promote water conservation and reduce maintenance concerns; and
- E. provide opportunities for installation of civic art in the landscape; designer/artist collaborations are encouraged

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board expressed appreciation for the street level design option with the larger consolidated planting strip. The Board looks forward to seeing more detail about the street level landscape, hardscape, and sidewalk amenities at the Recommendation meeting.

- 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.

Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:

Belltown is eclectic, diverse, eccentric and whimsical. New developments should incorporate elements on building facades, within open space, or on the sidewalk that refer to the neighborhood's rich art and history to reinforce a sense of place in Belltown.

- **Art and Heritage:** Art and History are vital to reinforcing a sense of place.
- **Green Streets:** Green Streets are street rights-of-way that are enhanced for pedestrian circulation and activity with a variety of pedestrian-oriented features, such as sidewalk widening, landscaping, artwork, and traffic calming. Interesting street level uses and pedestrian amenities enliven the Green Street and lend special identity to the surrounding area.
- **Street Hierarchy:** The function and character of Belltown's streetscapes are defined street by street. In defining the streetscape for various streets, the hierarchy of streets is determined by street function, adjacent land uses, and the nature of existing streetscape improvements.

Guidance reflects comments in response to Guideline D-2.

- 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.**

Belltown-specific supplemental guidance: Considerations

Consider employing one or more of the following lighting strategies as appropriate.

- A. Illuminate distinctive features of the building, including entries, signage, canopies, and areas of architectural detail and interest.
- B. Install lighting in display windows that spills onto and illuminates the sidewalk.
- C. Orient outside lighting to minimize glare within the public right-of-way.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that because of the context of this block, designing for safety is particularly important. Clear sight lines and adequate lighting should be included, as well as any other techniques to enhance safety at the street level.

- D-6 Design for Personal Safety & Security. Design the building and site to enhance the real and perceived feeling of personal safety and security in the immediate area.**

Guidance reflects comments in response to Guideline D-5.

E. Vehicular Access & Parking

Minimizing the Adverse Impacts

- 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that they look forward to seeing more information about the design of this item at the Recommendation stage, related to the car share spaces at the alley and the below-grade bicycle parking access.

- 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that they look forward to seeing more information about the design of this item at the Recommendation stage.

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.

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the following departures were requested:

- 1. Lot coverage above 65' height (23.49.158):** The Code requires a maximum of 75% lot coverage for building levels between 65' and 85' tall. 100% lot coverage is permitted for building levels up to 65' tall. The applicant proposes that if Alternate 1 is the Board-preferred option, then the building would include 100% lot coverage for all levels up to 70' tall. This would allow a consistent street wall in a building that is far below the maximum 125' height permitted in the zone.

The Board indicated that Alternate 3 is the preferred massing, with modifications to the street wall as described in response to Guideline B-4. However, if the applicant elects to proceed with Alternate 1, the Board would continue to entertain this proposed departure.

- 2. Street façade requirements (23.49.162):** The Code requires a maximum façade setback, and a minimum of 10' between those façade setbacks. The applicant proposes in Alternate 3 to provide 8' between façade setbacks, which will allow for decks that are recessed from the façade.

The Board indicated they would continue to entertain this departure at the Recommendation stage of review. The detailing of materials, colors, and façade setbacks will need to create a unified design, as described in response to Guideline B-4. The separation between façade setbacks could vary in width, if the result is a better overall design.

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.