



# City of Seattle

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

**DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES  
OF  
THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
December 14, 2011**

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Project Number: 3012732

Address: 1818 Fairview Avenue E.

Applicant: Brad Hinthorne, Perkins+Will, for  
Washington Holdings

Board Members Present:  
Dawn Bushnaq  
Lisa Picard  
Wolf Saar (Chair)  
Chip Wall

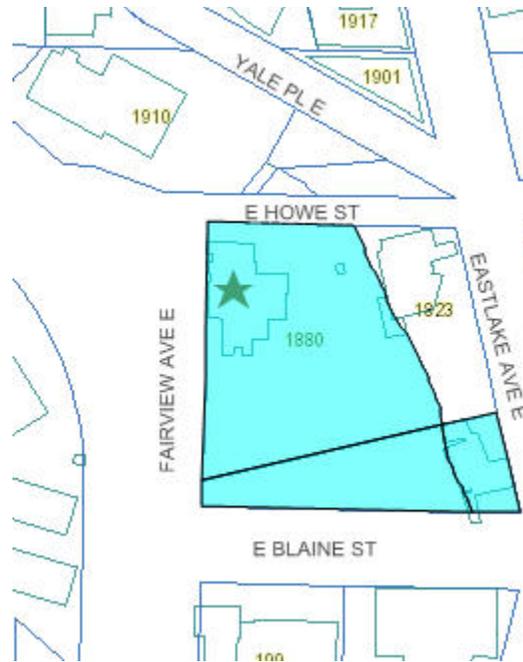
Board members absent: Evan Bourquard

Land Use Planner present: Michael Dorcy

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**The

Eastlake/South Lake Union development site is bounded by Fairview Avenue E. on the west, partially by Eastlake Avenue E. on the east, by unopened E. Howe Street to the north and E. Blaine Street on the south. The development site is irregular in shape, with most of the Eastlake Avenue E. property line a ragged line running southeast between E. Howe Street and a point where it intersects a trapezoidal- shaped lot bounded on the East by Eastlake Avenue E., on the south by E. Blaine Street, and on the west by Fairview Avenue E. The Eastlake Avenue E. flares to the east slightly as it runs from north to south. The overall site measures approximately 300 feet in the north/south direction and varies between 152 and 330 feet in the east/west direction. The site comprises approximately 75,500 square feet of land. A portion of the site at the north end is a mapped steep slope area.



There have been two structures and a portion of a third structure located on the site. The principal on-site structures were both removed within the past year. The southwest corner of the site lies within the Urban Maritime Shoreline environment. The development site is zoned C1-40.

The proposed development is for a 4 story office/lab building, containing approximately 197,000 square feet, with 3,000 square feet of commercial /retail space to be located at the southeast corner of the site. Mostly below-grade parking for approximately 200 vehicles will be located within the structure. . The parking garages would take access from Fairview Avenue E. and E. Blaine Street. Project work would include landscape and pedestrian improvements primarily along E. Blaine Street and Fairview Avenue E.

**ARCHITECTS' PRESENTATION**

Three alternate massing models for the site were briefly presented to the Board. The first was of an “L”-shaped structure, hinged at the southwest corner of the site. The second was an “L”-shape plus,” filling in the angular portion of the site that addresses Eastlake Avenue E. A third option. Identified by the design team as the preferred option, took the “L”-plus and removed a wedge with its broad end along E. Blaine Street to provide for an enclosed atrium at the center of the proposed structure. This scheme allowed the structure to engage Eastlake Avenue E. at its southeast corner where retail space was proposed. The southwest portion of the structure stepped down to a single story which provided the main lobby for the office/lab space and allowed for a roof deck and amenity area above.

While the first option allowed for easier floor planning and construction, scheme two would provide large, irregular floor plates that might be difficult to plan. The preferred third option was by far the most intriguing architecturally, especially as the atrium offered opportunities to integrate the internal spaces of the building and at the same time relate more sensitively to the existing urban context.

After asking a number of clarifying questions following the architect's presentation, the Board elicited comments from members of the public attending the meeting.

### **Public Comments:**

Comments solicited from the public included the following:

- Existing parking in the Fairview Avenue E. right-of-way would be adversely affected by the proposed development on the site.  
Concerns about view blockage and raised the broader issue of the "fit" of the height, bulk and scale of the proposed structure within the established "neighborhood character."
- Concerned about loading and truck maneuvering required to service such a large development; there was general concern about the safety of pedestrians using E. Blaine St.

### **Board's Deliberations:**

The Board began by noting both the potential of the site for office development and the responsibility of development on the site for respecting the existing environment. The Board identified three main issues that needed to be satisfactorily addressed by the development team as the project proceeded from this conceptual phase through full design development:

- Engaging the lake with the Fairview facade
- Allow the atrium to energize more of the structure, including the western portion
- Don't allow the "diagram" of the preferred scheme, the central, energizing atrium feature, to get lost in the massing and architectural expression at the perimeter of the building.

Within the discussion surrounding the first question, Board comments included the following: "the expression along Fairview is just a blank wall," "too monolithic," "too much wall"; "What if the atrium faced to the west?" Discussing the atrium, concerns were expressed regarding the powerful conceptual idea of the atrium getting lost, especially as it energized the overall external organization and expression of the building. As a powerful idea in organizing the internal parts of the building, it would be a shame if the atrium became too capsulized as perceived from outside the building and lost as the design engine it potentially was.

Since the structure would not be allowed to move eastwards to engage Eastlake Avenue N. except for a small portion of ton the southeast corner where the property line actually abutted the right-of-way, there need to be a strong statement at the corner to compensate for the small amount of frontage on Eastlake.

Don't allow the needs for loading zones and spaces override what should be more broadly based design decisions.

There was some discussion regarding a decision already made by Seattle Public Utilities to locate a standby generator for pumps related to the overflow sewer system in E. Blaine Street.

The generator had been designed to rest above ground in the right-of-way just north of the curb on Blaine, without regard for any development to occur on the subject site. The applicants noted that they had been unsuccessful in requests to underground the generator or to move it to accommodate the design of the proposed structure. The Board noted that while they appreciated the need for the facility, SPU plans for the location of the generator were unfortunate. Ideally they would like “to see it disappear.” Short of that they strongly supported any attempt to underground the facility or at the very least to take into account the impending development at the subject site and adjust the location of the public facility to more felicitously accommodate the functional and aesthetic needs of the private development site.

During the course of the Board’s deliberations, it became obvious that the following design guidelines were “most pertinent to this project and site”: A-1, A-2, A-3, B-1, C-2, C-3, D-2, D-6, D-11, and E-3. The Board agreed that the guidelines identified below should be regarded of highest priority for a successful design.

## **DESIGN GUIDELINES**

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, hearing public comment, and addressing their major concerns regarding the proposal, the Design Review Board members provided the siting and design guidance described below 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 Developments* of highest priority to this project.

### **A. Site Planning**

#### ***A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics***

***The siting of buildings should respond to specific site condition and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.***

See comments above in the Board’s deliberations that relate to the west façade and the presence of Lake Union to the west of the site.

#### ***A-2 Streetscape Compatibility.***

***The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-Way.***

This guideline relates to the Board’s confirmations of points of entry (see A-3) and activation of E. Blaine Street, as well as concerns of lakeside orientation and Fairview Avenue blank facades.

#### ***A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street***

***Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.***

This guideline was selected as a confirmation by the Board of the selection of the southwest corner as the main entry into the office/lab building and the selection of the southeast corner as the best site for retail space.

## **B. Height, Bulk and Scale**

### ***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....***

This guideline reflects the Board's support of the overall massing of the preferred scheme, the importance of the atrium in the composition and comments regarding the orientation of the atrium and the workings of the inside/outside of the atrium and the perception of the atrium, both from the inside and the outside of the structure.

## **C. Architectural Elements and Material**

### ***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'***

Develop a well-portioned 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. This guideline expresses the Board's concern that the articulation of the building (external, primarily) should not hide the conceptual diagram that gives the building its strength and coherency.

### ***C-3 Human Scale***

***The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve a good human scale.***

The Board considers the activation of each of the entrances at each of the southern corners important to the success of the project. A big challenge will be to provide for the parking and loading without introducing elements that run counter to providing for a desirable human scale.

## **D. Pedestrian Environment**

### ***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.***

Thoroughly explore a variety of treatments of the street-level façade and landscaping along Fairview Avenue E. The façade should be designed so as not to be without character or pedestrian amenity or interest.

**D-6            Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities and Service Areas**  
***Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible.***

Utilities and service spaces needed to find their rightful hierarchical space in the scheme of things.

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

The Board thought that although the development of the building entry at the southwest corner and the retail space at the southeast corner were moves in the right direction for engaging the street corners, the treatment of the retail space in particular was “too heavy,” given the amount of area actually facing onto Eastlake. Likewise the west façade needed to engage the Lake in a more pronounced way.

## **E. Landscaping**

**E-3    Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions**

***The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions...view corridors...and off-site conditions....***

The design team should provide studies of the proposed pedestrian environment on all four sides of the development.. The applicant should be prepared to present details for a variety of streetscape and pedestrian pathway amenities, including lighting, overhead weather protection, signage and other elements calculated to generate a friendly and lively environment at the perimeter of the site.

Landscaping should be designed with the goal of realizing the prioritized guidelines, should soften the edge conditions where appropriate, and should contribute to an attractive and usable interior open space, courtyard area. The design should incorporate specific treatments to provide for attractiveness and an allure to the pedestrian through-site pathway and establish a genuine neighborhood amenity. The Board would expect to see a comprehensive Landscape Plan, one that treats not only the on-site open space but the streets’ edges as well.

## **Departures from Development Standards:**

**Staff Comments:**

It is the expectation of the Design Review Board and DPD that the applicant proceed to further design development, which includes a demonstrable response to the guidelines and guidance noted above, and to a Master Use Permit application. Subsequent to a successful application, the proposal will be returned to the Design review Board for a Recommendation Meeting, at which time the adequacy of the design's response to the stated guidelines and Board's guidance should be demonstrated.

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