



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012797

Address: 802 Seneca Street

Applicant: Mike Carey

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, January 04, 2012

Board Members Present: Evan Bourquard (Chair)
Dawn Bushnaq
Clint Keithly
Lisa Picard
Chip Wall

Board Members Absent: Wolf Saar (recused)

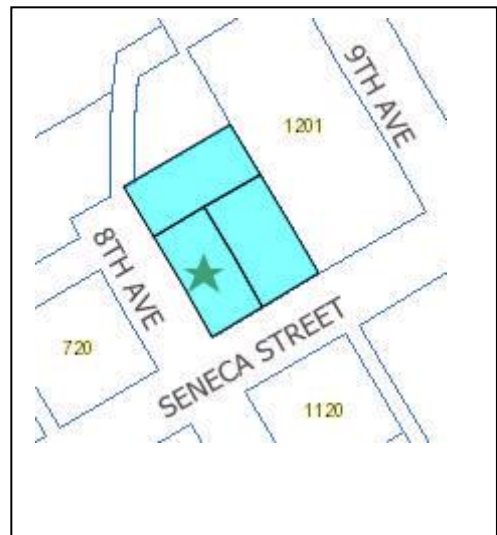
DPD Staff Present: Shelley Bolser

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: HR (Highrise Multi-family residential)

Nearby Zones: North: HR
South: HR
East: HR with a Major Institution Overlay
West: HR

Lot Area: 23,111 square feet



Current Development: The site is currently vacant with remnants of the two early 20th century buildings that were demolished in 2007. A surface parking lot is located in the eastern portion of the site.

Access: One curb cut from Seneca Street.

Surrounding Development: The area includes a wide mix of uses, including multi-family highrise and mid-rise level structures, hospitals, medical uses, and parking structures. Freeway Park is located north of the site, separated from the site by a driveway/fire access to Horizon House. The four-story Benaroya Research building is located immediately to the east. A highrise residential building (Manor House) is located to the south, across Seneca Street. An early 20th century 10-story building (Exeter House) is located to the west, across 8th Avenue.

8th Avenue is a split street, with a steeply sloping grade adjacent to the site and a raised viaduct in the western portion of the right of way. The raised viaduct portion includes a walkway to Freeway Park. The lower portion curves underneath the viaduct and connects to Hubbell Place to the west. A Horizon House fire access driveway is located immediately north of the site and connects to the lower portion of 8th Avenue.

ECAs: The site is mapped as a steep slope Environmentally Critical Area but regulated as a potential slide Environmentally Critical Area due to the HR zoning designation.

Neighborhood Character: The First Hill neighborhood is densely developed with structures from the early 20th century to very recent development. Freeway Park is located to the north of the site, with multiple access points from various bridges, roadways, and stair structures (such as Piggott Corridor). This area is located immediately across I-5 from downtown and the downtown skyline serves as a backdrop to many places in the neighborhood. The Major Institution Overlay to the east of the site is dominated by medical uses, including major hospitals.

The area includes many sidewalks and transit options. Seneca Street is a well-traveled corridor between downtown and First Hill and Capitol Hill beyond. Parking is located in above and below grade structures, with some small surface lots and areas of on-street parking.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed development is a major revision to a Master use Permit that included design review and was issued in 2007. The previously approved MUP was for a 240' tall (24-story) building and a second 11-story building above a base of parking, with a public open space

elevated walkway to Freeway Park over the western portion of the site. That permit included 310 residential units and 315 parking spaces.

Since that MUP was issued, the Highrise (HR) zoning in this area has changed to allow buildings up to 300' tall. The applicant applied for a major MUP revision in response to this zoning change.

The proposed major MUP revision is for a 31-story building above a base of parking with open space at the base of the tower, above the parking levels. The elevated pedestrian connection to Freeway Park remains part of the proposal. Two curb cuts from Seneca Street that were approved with MUP 3003307 have been removed from the proposal. The parking levels are at or below grade as viewed from Seneca Street, and above grade as viewed from 8th Avenue. The proposed development includes 323 residential units, 3,521 square feet of commercial development at the street level, and 324 parking spaces at and below grade.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: January 4, 2012

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Four alternative design schemes were presented. All of the alternatives included a residential tower built to the maximum height for this zone, parking at and below grade accessed from two curb cuts on 8th Avenue, a 20' setback from the east property line, a 10' setback from the west property line (for the public pedestrian connection across the site), and a tower that is angled from the property lines.

The first, and applicant-preferred scheme (Alternative A) showed a 300' tall tower located in the center of the site. Residential open space would be located at the north side of the site, level with Freeway Park, and at the rooftop. Potential materials included terracotta colored metal to respond to nearby brick and terracotta, light blue tinted glass, darker blue spandrel glass, and a mix of colors for the metal mullions. The benefits of this Alternative included a more slender tower and less building footprint than the approved MUP, more public open space at the street level, and an increased distance from the tower to the south (Royal Manor). Pros also included the ability to provide better storefront windows for the retail spaces at grade in a plaza setting, since the windows would not be cut off by the steep grades at street level. The setback from Seneca Street would allow for a better view of the Exeter House façade, as viewed from the east on Seneca Street. The applicant noted that a negative aspect of this setback is a lack of response to the context of nearby urban street walls.

The second scheme (Alternative B) showed a similar configuration to Alternative A, but with the tower located at the south property line rather than centered on the site. The applicant noted that while this configuration responds to the nearby street wall context, it reduces privacy for the residents of Royal Manor and the proposed units, reduces the view of Exeter House, and doesn't allow room for a public plaza at Seneca Street. A positive aspect of this configuration

was a better view of Freeway Park from 8th Avenue. Residential open space could be provided on the north side of the site and at the roof.

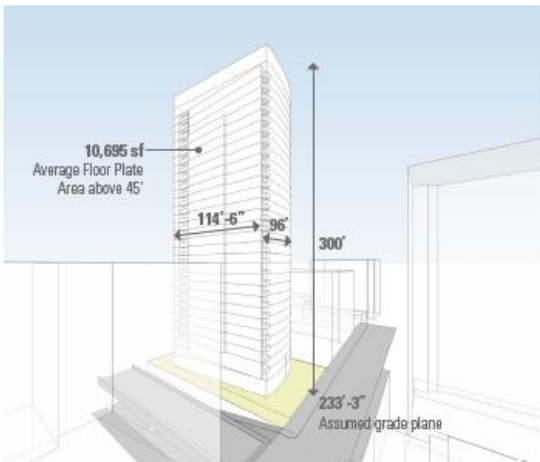
The third scheme (Alternative C) showed a tower centrally located above a 45' tall podium, as viewed from Seneca St. Pros included a response to the context of nearby street walls and a Land Use Code-conforming development. Cons included a lack of public open space at grade, reducing the view of Exeter House, a potential lack of cohesive design between the upper tower mass and the lower podium mass. Residential open space could be located at the top of the podium and the roof. This Alternative included 10 more parking spaces than Alternatives A and B.

The fourth scheme (Alternative D) showed the same configuration as Alternative C, with the tower moved to the south property line. Increased parking was the same as in Alternative C. Pros and cons were listed as being the same as Alternative C.

The applicant distributed a supplementary EDG packet page to the Board, identifying the existing Design Review Guidelines they saw as highest priority to the project.

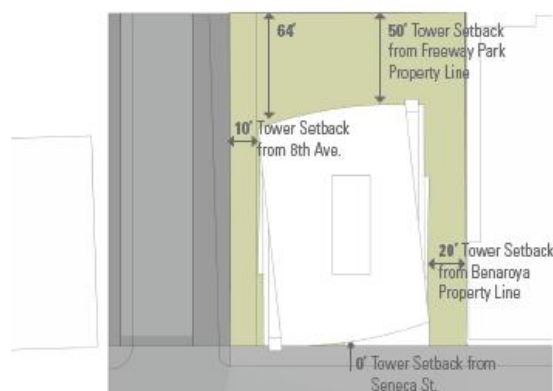
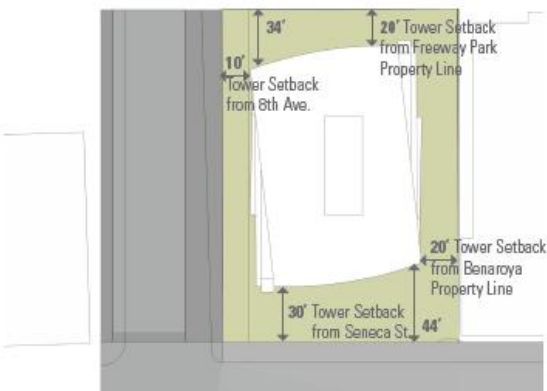
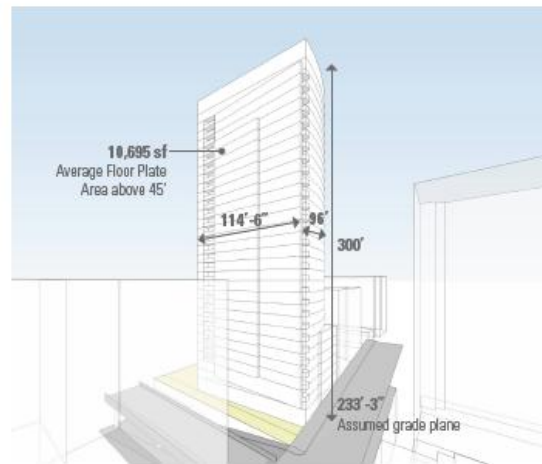
Alternative A

Single Tower with Plaza



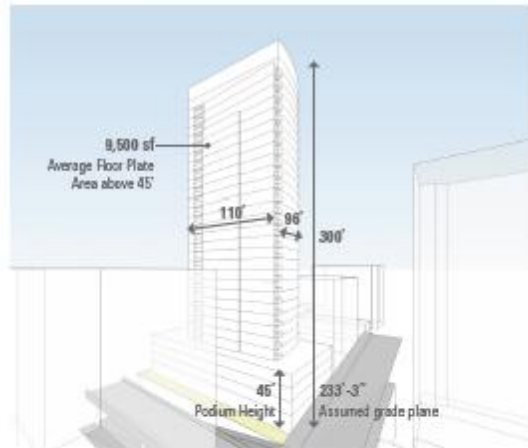
Alternative B

Single Tower; Tower Meets Street Wall at Seneca



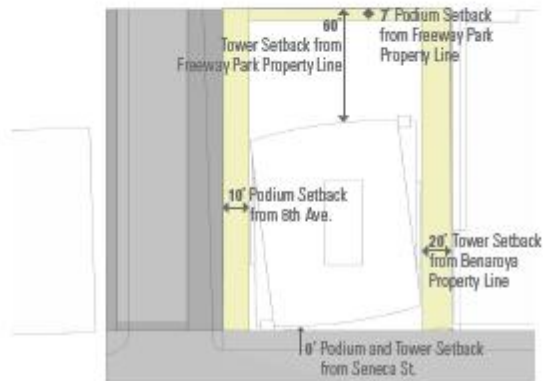
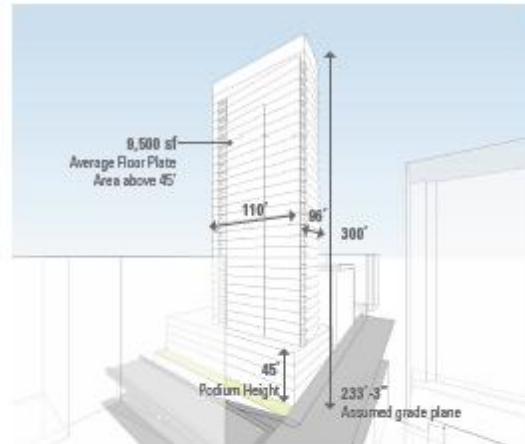
Alternative C

Single Tower Centered on Podium; Podium Meets Street Wall at Seneca



Alternative D

Single Tower on Podium; Podium and Tower Meet Street Wall at Seneca



The applicant described how the preferred Alternative A compares to the original approved MUP, since the proposal is a major revision to that MUP.

The previously approved MUP included 11% open space at street level (Seneca) and Alternative A included 44% of the site as open space at street level. The potential shadows from Alternative A would be more than the approved MUP, since the change in Highrise zoning now allows for much taller buildings than in 2007. Alternative A includes less building bulk as viewed from the east and west, due to a more slender tower and removal of the north 11-story building from the proposal.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 28 members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Appreciation for proposed connection to Freeway Park and development of this site
- Would like to see the Freeway Park connection designed to be as direct a physical and visual connection as possible between Seneca St and Freeway Park. The landscape plan should reference Freeway Park planting and hardscape, and should maximize sight lines. The

surface should be designed for universal access (handicapped, bikes, and strollers). The lighting should be adequate and reference Freeway Park fixtures.

- Appreciation for restaurant and retail uses for the neighborhood at street level
- Any street level surfaces should be graffiti-resistant and upper building levels should be designed to reduce glare impacts to the south and west buildings.
- The garage areas should include accommodation for trucks for residents moving in and out. The 8th Avenue right of way is difficult to navigate and it would be hard for moving trucks to park there safely.
- Alternative C is better because the street wall is a better response to nearby urban context, and the podium could offer an opportunity to design a street wall in scale with nearby context. The setback and open space alternatives are more suburban in nature and not appropriate for this site. The stepped plazas with planter walls separating sidewalk from plaza could lead to the plazas feeling proprietary rather than public.
- This site is an anchor for the north end of 8th Avenue and provides a gateway from First Hill to Freeway Park. This corner and the Freeway Park connection should be designed as an anchor.
- The comparison between tower alternatives needs to include a comparison with the bulk of the tower in the original approved MUP.
- Concerns about vehicle access, traffic patterns, and number of parking spaces
 - DPD staff explained that this is reviewed by DPD, but not within the purview of the Design Review Board. Those comments should be sent directly to the DPD Planner, Shelley Bolser.
- Light fixtures should be lower level, similar to those in the approved MUP and the First Hill neighborhood plans.
- Concern about potential shadows from the proposed development
- The proposal should be designed in context with First Hill scale and treatment, rather than downtown. Benaroya Research center was mentioned as an example by one person.
- Concern about the proposed vehicular access and trash collection from 8th Avenue, which is steep and can be icy at times, or occasionally closed by SDOT for maintenance.
- Concern with the building height, development of apartments rather than condos, and would prefer this building to be located south of Madison
- Concern about the amount of building area below grade adjacent to Benaroya Research
- Concern about the amount of parking spaces – too many for First Hill
- The design analysis should include more focus on nearby context and the appropriate building mass for this site. The tower with open space at grade doesn't reflect nearby context.
- Design Guidelines that are highest priority for this site include Adjacent Sites, Blank Walls, Architectural Context
- The plazas on Seneca St need to be open to the sidewalk, rather than walled off from the sidewalk and walled off between the plazas.
- Concern that the proposed departures are even possible with Land Use Code requirements
- The Freeway Park connection should be as physically and visually direct as possible. The applicant mentioned jogging the walkway to save Japanese Maples in the Park, but those maples have a lifespan that is more limited than this structure. The structure will last longer and have a bigger impact on the neighborhood and Park, and perhaps is more important than the maples.

- Any proposed landscaping should be low maintenance.

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 Citywide 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

A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics. The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board acknowledged the difficulties of dealing with grade changes across the site, including the Seneca St and 8th Avenue frontages, as well as the proposed connection to Freeway Park.

The Board was concerned about the proposed plazas and separation of retail and building entry from the sidewalks, especially at the Seneca street frontage. The context of nearby urban street walls should be expressed at this site, with perhaps some setback for a wider sidewalk (but not to the extent of plazas shown in Alternative A). The storefront windows should be located adjacent to the sidewalk, and the storefronts should be designed in response to the changing grade. The Board noted there are some positive examples of this in the west slope of the Capitol Hill neighborhood. The street wall should engage the sidewalk and add to human activity at the sidewalk.

The Board gave guidance that the proposed public connection to Freeway Park should be wider than shown, and include a continuous ramp into Freeway Park instead of an ADA lift. The retail facing this walkway may not be exactly at grade with the walkway if a ramp system is included, but the Board acknowledged that the ramp is more important than walkway-level retail in that area. Any retail or restaurant at the base of the building should include a high amount of glazed storefronts.

The Board also encouraged the applicant to work with the tower placement and grades to place the retail level with the walkway ramp, if possible. The Board expressed willingness to consider departures in order to allow for a wider walkway to Freeway Park and retail that meets the walkway grade.

The Board strongly encouraged the applicant to work with the Freeway Park groups on the design of the proposed walkway to the Park.

The Board looks forward to seeing detailed designs of the proposed walkway and Seneca Street frontage at the Recommendation meeting. The graphics should clearly indicate the proposed dimensions, grade changes, how the storefront system is designed and responds to the adjacent walkways, landscaping, hardscape, conceptual signage plan, and lighting. Pedestrian perspectives and sections will be important in understanding the proposed design of all street frontages.

A-2 Streetscape Compatibility. The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.

In addition to the comments in response to A-1, the Board noted that the street frontage should reflect the context of street level design in the First Hill neighborhood, especially on Seneca Street.

The proposed walkway to Freeway Park will be placed on a podium above 8th Avenue sidewalk. The design should ease the visual transition between these two areas, since the grade drops steeply down on 8th Avenue.

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

Guidance reflects the comments in response to Guidelines A-1 and A-2.

A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access. Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties, and pedestrian safety.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted the challenges of parking and service access from lower 8th Avenue, given the grade change and the difficult configuration of the street to the north and west. At the Recommendation meeting, the applicant should clearly demonstrate how the proposed garage entries will operate, and how these entries and the garage area will allow adequate access for moving trucks (loading) and recycling/trash collection. Diagrams and sections will be helpful to demonstrate this information.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted the importance of the corner of 8th and Seneca as a gateway for the neighborhood, between Freeway Park and 8th Avenue, and between First Hill and Downtown. The building should be designed to respond to this gateway location.

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 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the context of the nearby area as described more in response to Guideline C-1. The Board agreed that some version of Alternatives C or D may be better, since it allows for a strong street wall, a building base that responds to nearby First Hill neighborhood scale, and an upper tower that responds to nearby Downtown scale.

Overall, the Board felt that the proposed sculpted tower responds appropriately to the Downtown context, but the lower portion of the building needs massing and scale that responds to the context of First Hill development. The design should carefully knit these two different scales of development.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

- C-1 Architectural Context. 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the lower height and human scale of First Hill context. They also noted the strong street wall context of Seneca Street, and the tower context of Downtown. As described in response to B-1, the proposed design should reference these scales and treatments in upper and lower portions of the building, and knit the expressions for a cohesive overall design.

The Board noted that the proposed terracotta colored metal panels should instead be a durable material at the base that reflects nearby materials, such as actual masonry or terracotta.

The upper portions of the tower can reflect more of the Downtown context, but the applicant should work to express the residential nature of the units. Nearby First Hill context does this by framing units with balconies or other bay expressions. An uninterrupted glass curtain wall is less successful at achieving a residentially scaled tower in First Hill. The Board noted appreciation for the sculpted elements of the tower and the shadow lines, and advised the applicant to retain these positive aspects as they move forward to the next stage of design.

- 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. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.

Guidance reflects the comments in response to Guidelines B-2 and C-1.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted the importance of incorporating human scale into the design of the Seneca Street level areas, the areas adjacent to 8th Avenue, and the expression of residential units in the tower. This guidance is described in response to Guidelines A-1, A-2, B-1, and C-1.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board directed the applicant to design with materials that reflect the nearby context, particularly base materials that respond to First Hill context and tower materials that respond to residential tower context. This guidance is described in response to guidelines B-1 and C-1.

D. Pedestrian Environment

D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances. Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.

Guidance reflects comments in response to Guidelines A-1 and A-2.

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.

Guidance reflects comments in response to Guidelines A-1, A-2 and D-5, specifically the plazas and retail frontage at Seneca Street and the parking garage wall at 8th Avenue.

D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures. The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape.

Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the challenging nature of 8th Avenue, with the steep grade change, the Convention Center parking garage wall to the north, the Horizon House fire access driveway to the north, and the upper 8th Avenue viaduct to the west. The Board noted that this is not a pedestrian street frontage, but the visual impact of the parking garage still needs to be adequately designed. The Board directed the applicant to design this street-facing wall to include articulation and façade treatments. The Board indicated that they would be willing to entertain departures to provide additional setback from the 8th Avenue public right of way for a wider sidewalk and additional articulation and modulation of the garage wall.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board directed the applicant to design with safety in mind, especially at the lower 8th Avenue façade. Lighting and clear sight lines are important, as well as creating a more direct visual connection from the proposed upper Freeway Park walkway to the lower 8th Avenue sidewalk.

D-10 Commercial Lighting. Appropriate levels of lighting should be provided in order to promote visual interest and a sense of security for people in commercial districts during evening hours. Lighting may be provided by incorporation into the building façade, the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, in landscaped areas, and/or on signage.

Guidance reflects comments in response to Guidelines A-1, A-2, and D-7.

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 a building. Blank walls should be avoided.

Guidance reflects comments in response to Guidelines A-1 and A-2.

E. Landscaping

E-1 Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites. Where possible, and where there is not another overriding concern, landscaping should reinforce the character of neighboring properties and abutting streetscape.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board directed the applicant to carefully design the proposed Freeway Park walkway as a transition from First Hill into Freeway Park. Landscaping will be an important element of this design. Plants should be chosen

to allow clear sight lines and reference Freeway Park plantings. The walkway should also allow for maximum visual connection with 8th Avenue below.

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.

Guidance reflects comments in response to Guideline E-1.

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. Additional height and extra residential floor area (23.45.516.C.2.b.1):** The Code requires that buildings proposed more than 240' tall include a maximum floor area of 9,500 square feet per floor, for building heights above 45'. The applicant proposes a 300' tall building with 10,695 square feet of gross floor area per floor, including floors above 45' tall.

The Board expressed concern with this departure, but indicated they may be willing to entertain this departure if the applicant can demonstrate how the proposed departure proposes a tower design that better meets the intent of the adopted design guidelines.

Possible methods to better meet design review guidelines include better quality open space connection to Freeway Park, more consolidated usable public open space at the west property line, fewer shadow impacts to Freeway Park, and a street wall that better responds to neighborhood context. Any of these alternatives would need to demonstrate how the proposed departure better meets the intent of the adopted design review guidelines.

- 2. Additional height and extra residential floor area (23.45.516.C.2.b.2):** The Code requires that buildings proposed more than 240' tall include no parking at or above grade, unless separated from the street by an intervening use. The applicant proposes parking at the 8th Avenue street frontage, due to the grade changes and the difficulty of providing any active street level use in that area. No parking would be above grade at Seneca Street.

The Board indicated they would be willing to entertain this departure, provided that the applicant demonstrated how the proposed departure better meets the intent of the adopted design review guidelines. Gaining additional parking doesn't serve as an adequate rationale

for the proposed departure, especially in an area where no parking is required by the Land Use Code.

- 3. Setbacks and Separations (23.45.518):** The Code requires an average of 7' and a minimum of 5' setback for portions of a structure up to 45' tall abutting a street. The applicant proposes a 0' setback for the garage wall on 8th Avenue, in order to provide a larger surface area and more open space above the parking garage.

The Board indicated they would be willing to entertain this departure, provided that the applicant demonstrated how the proposed departure better meets the intent of the adopted design review guidelines. The open space as shown on the east and south edges doesn't appear to better meet the intent of the design review guidelines, but a wider, direct, well-designed pedestrian connection to Freeway Park might meet the rationale for a departure from this requirement.

- 4. Setbacks and Separations (23.45.518):** The Code requires an average of 7' and a minimum of 5' setback for portions of a structure up to 45' tall abutting a rear lot line. The applicant proposes a 0' setback for the garage wall on the north property line, for the same reasons noted in Departure 2.

The Board indicated they would be willing to entertain this departure, provided that the applicant demonstrated how the proposed departure better meets the intent of the adopted design review guidelines. Simply gaining additional parking won't serve as an adequate rationale for the proposed departure, especially in an area where no parking is required by the Land Use Code.

- 5. Highrise zone width and floor size limits (23.45.520):** The Code requires a maximum of 110' building width for portions of a building above 45' tall. The applicant proposes a 116' building width for the building above 45' tall, for the same reasons noted in Departure request #1.

The Board expressed concern with this departure, but indicated they would be willing to entertain this departure, provided that the applicant demonstrated how the proposed departure better meets the intent of the adopted design review guidelines, similar to the direction in response to Departure request #1.

- 6. Highrise zone width and floor size limits (23.45.520):** The Code requires that building areas taller than 45' may have a maximum width of 130' as long as the area per floor doesn't exceed 10,000 square feet. The applicant proposes a 116' wide tower with a maximum floor area of 10,695 square feet, for the reasons stated in Departure request #1.

The Board expressed concern with this departure, but indicated they would be willing to entertain this departure, provided that the applicant demonstrated how the proposed

departure better meets the intent of the adopted design review guidelines, similar to the direction in response to Departure 1.

BOARD DIRECTION

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