City of Seattle

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

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE
EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

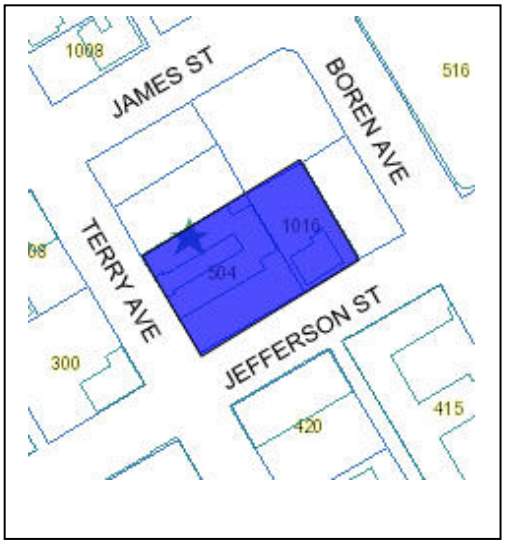
Project Number:	3012929
Address:	504 Terry Avenue
Applicant:	Jim Westcott
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, May 02, 2012
Board Members Present:	Dawn Bushnaq Wolf Saar Chip Wall Bo Zhang
Board Members Absent:	Ric Cochrane Lisa Picard
DPD Staff Present:	Bruce Rips and Lindsay King

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Highrise (HR)

Nearby Zones: North: HR and Midrise (MR) with Major Institution Overlay (MIO) with various height limits.
South: MR and MIO with a 105' height limit (MIO 105).
East: Neighborhood Commercial Three (NC3 65 & 85) with 65' and 85' height limits between Boren Ave. and Broadway.
West: HR and HR with a MIO with a 105' height limit.

Lot Area: 23,584 square feet



Current Development:	A three story multifamily residential building and a small two story office building constructed in 1959 and 1960 respectively.
Access:	Jefferson Street
Surrounding Development & Neighborhood Character:	Located at the northeast corner of the intersection at Terry Avenue and Jefferson Street and within the southwestern portion of the First Hill neighborhood, the development site sits directly east of the Harborview Medical Center campus, one block southwest of the Swedish Medical Center campus and one a half blocks to the west of the Seattle University campus. The interstitial areas between the major institutions house low and mid-rise apartment buildings, service stations and small commercial structures dating from the early 20th century to the 1960s. The recent growth of the Harborview Medical complex has introduced sizeable medical office and care buildings with beige masonry matching Harborview Hall and, in some cases, generous amounts of glazing.
ECAs:	No mapped environmental critical areas.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes a 26-story structure containing 332 residential units over 4,420 square feet of commercial space and four levels of below grade parking.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The three massing options share several programmatic ideas: a pronounced podium carrying a residential tower, vehicular entry on Terry Ave. across from the NBJ Medical Building, and retail commercial space fronting onto Jefferson St. At its base, massing Option # 1 reserves its largest setback at the north property line, adjacent to the parking lot. Above the podium, the tower steps back an estimated 66 feet from the west property line. In this option, the tower resembles an uninflected rectangular mass with a smaller box containing the mechanical equipment at its top. The architect has congregated the commercial uses at the corner of Terry Ave and Jefferson St. and placed the lobby and leasing area along Jefferson St. A mix of live/work units wraps around the central core on the north and east sides.

Options # 2 and # 3 introduce to the program a small open space at the corner of Jefferson and Terry. A commercial space defines the open space's east side with lobby space behind it on Jefferson St. Apartment units face the north property line. In this scheme, the podium has less prominence with the exception of a four-story, cubic volume approaching Terry Ave and defining the northern edge of the corner open space. Beginning at approximately 35 feet from the west property line, the architect bifurcates the tower by creating a slight vertical reveal that visually

divides the mass into north and south sections. The tower on its southern half rises from grade without the use of the podium to form an intermediate mass. This section continues skyward several floors beyond the north half. The third option employs the same massing strategy with some modification. A horizontal reveal visually separates the podium from the tower allowing the shaft to float above the four story platform and extend over the sidewalk. Programmatically the scheme shifts the lobby to the west allowing the open space to become a forecourt for the tower. Commercial uses form storefronts along Jefferson Str.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Eleven members of the public affixed their names to the Early Design Review meeting sign-in sheet. The speaker raised the following issues:

Program

- The public would like a grocery store in the neighborhood. The area set aside for commercial use is too small.
- The building should embrace the open space.

Height, Bulk and Scale

- The proposed design ignores the real possibility that the surrounding parking lot could be redeveloped.

Security/Landscaping

- The proposal site lies near the Harborview Trauma Center. When designing the streetscape, consider the individuals who will walk near the site.
- Burglars enter residential units from balconies. Sliding doors are easy to open from the exterior.
- Use good low level lighting that projects downward.
- The project design should provide "eyes on the street".
- Dogs should have a special place to defecate otherwise they will ruin the landscaping.
- Consider implementing crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) practices for the proposed open space.
- The project site lies along the path from Harborview's mental health center to its Emergency Room. There is a lot of pedestrian traffic. Some of the clients look for a place to hang out.

General Observations

- Consider the flight path of the helicopters that fly in and out of Harborview.
- The initial design effort has merit.

DPD received two letters – one in opposition to the project. The author decried the insertion of another high rise in this First Hill neighborhood. The other letter writer focused on the project's exacerbation of the dearth of parking in the area.

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.

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

The Board agreed with the relationship of the building program (Option # 3) to the adjacent streets.

A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street. Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

See D-12.

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

The design of the streetscape should consider the needs of the various constituents who live and work in the neighborhood.

A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites. Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.

A departure request for upper level setbacks along the adjacent parcels is problematic. The Board requested further investigation of whether the granting of the departure imposes constraints on potential surrounding development. Adjustment to the proposal's floor and unit sizes may make the request unnecessary.

A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street. For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.

A-7 Residential Open Space. Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.

Residents will have multiple open spaces for their use. Design of the park at the corner of Terry Ave and Jefferson St. should accommodate tower residents, clients of the tenant spaces, nearby employees and neighbors. The residents and commercial tenants facing

this open space should be able to observe the park from their units and shops, providing an informal means of security.

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.**

Locating parking access across Terry Ave from Harborview's garages across Terry Ave. makes the most sense as it provides the opportunity for a degree of continuity of landscaping along the rights of way and on both sides of the park.

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.**

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.**

The Board preferred massing option # 3 and emphasized that a structure with clean lines and a modernist vocabulary is an appropriate design response for this location. The clarity of forms should be reinforced with significant attention paid to the development of the surfaces which express at a fine grain the building's residential raison d'être.

The base ought to anchor the building. A more contextual examination of the neighborhood should provide the architect with enough clues to design a structure that relates to its context.

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.**

The Board noted the prevalence of masonry in neighboring buildings and encouraged its use.

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.**

The Board noted its appreciation for the architect's ability to express the parti's with such clarity.

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

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.

The notion that the two vertical masses that comprise the tower may have contrasting surfaces appealed to the Board members. The concept may express itself in a dialogue between heavy and light materials. This idea or theme should be applied to the structure's base. The design should also recognize the presence of masonry buildings in the vicinity. This represents one approach to reinforcing the need for a sense of scale.

C-5 Structured Parking Entrances. The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.

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.

The structure's base needs to engage both the street and the small park, considered central to the organization of 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.

D-3 Retaining Walls. Retaining walls near a public sidewalk that extend higher than eye level should be avoided where possible. Where higher retaining walls are unavoidable, they should be designed to reduce their impact on pedestrian comfort and to increase the visual interest along the streetscapes.

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. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.

Due to the absence of an alley, the Board expects to review a workable plan for the service areas.

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

Recognizing the neighbors' safety concerns, the Board requested that the proposed design address this important element.

D-9 **<u>Commercial Signage</u>. Signs should add interest to the street front environment and should be appropriate for the scale and character desired in the area.**

The Board expects to review a signage concept plan at the Recommendation meeting.

D-10 **<u>Commercial Lighting</u>. 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.**

A commercial lighting plan that addresses pedestrian safety along the sidewalks and in the open space should be presented at the Recommendation meeting.

D-11 **<u>Commercial Transparency</u>. 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.**

The commercial uses placed along Jefferson St. and facing the proposed park should have considerable amounts of transparency to connect the interior spaces to the activities in the park and rights of way.

D-12 **<u>Residential Entries and Transitions</u>. For residential projects in commercial zones, the space between the residential entry and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and a visually interesting street front for pedestrians. Residential buildings should enhance the character of the streetscape with small gardens, stoops and other elements that work to create a transition between the public sidewalk and private entry.**

Discussion focused on whether a secondary residential entry should occur on Jefferson St. The Board did not encourage a specific direction.

E. Landscaping

E-2 **<u>Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site</u>. 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.**

Two streets and the two building walls will define the edges of the park. Emphasizing the connection of the commercial uses and the park will help ensure the open space's success. The south wall of the garage entrance would potentially form a blank wall on the park. Paley Park in Manhattan and Waterfall Park in Seattle exemplify intimate open spaces with building walls defining much of the perimeter.

E-3 **<u>Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions</u>. 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.**

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. The applicant proposes a departure from SMC 23.45.518 requiring lot lines abutting the street to have a ten foot setback above 45 feet. The applicant initially requests no setback from the property line above 55 feet on the south elevation.

2. The applicant proposes a departure from SMC 23.45.518, requiring lot lines abutting neither a street nor alley to have a 20 foot minimum setback above 45 feet. The applicant's diagram describes a 15 foot setback on the north elevation facing the existing parking lot.

The Board noted that the granting of departure request # 1 rests on the quality of the podium and how well it relates to its context. Departure # 2 would impact future development of the adjacent parcels. The Board requires an analysis of the possible impacts and further study of the proposal's floor size and units.

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.