



City of Seattle

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



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE PRIORITIES WEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

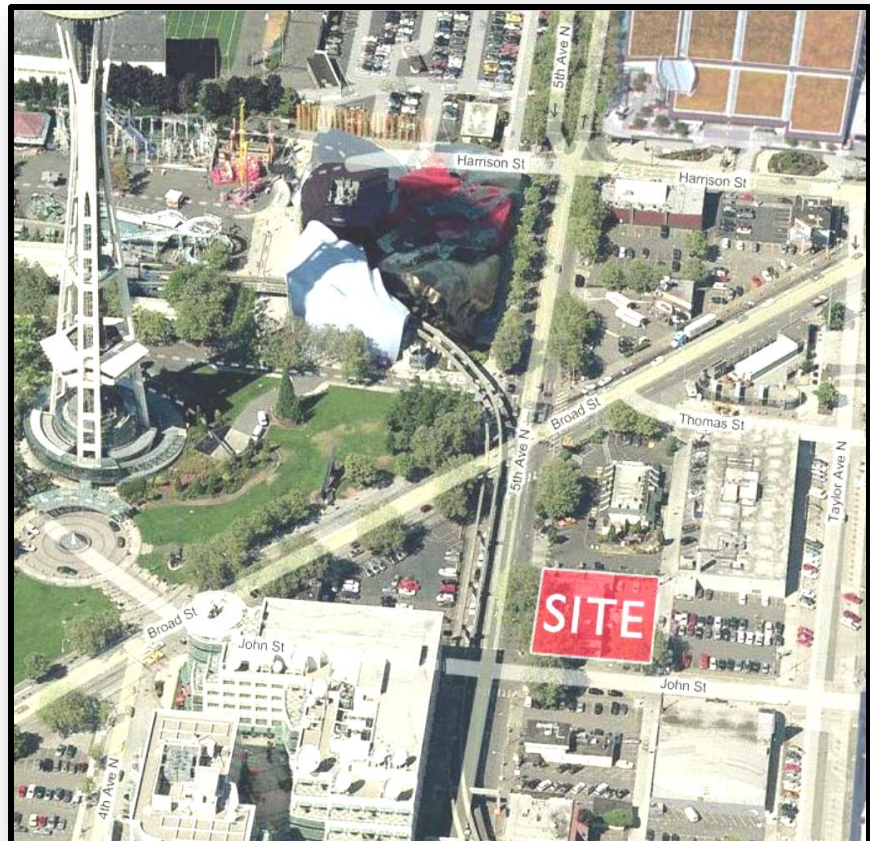
Project number:	3012936
Project Address:	500 John St.
Applicant:	Jens Muller of Nicholson Kovalchick Architects for L & P Partners
Date of meeting:	March 21, 2012
Board Members Present:	David Delfs (Board Chair) Mindy Black Jacob Connell Jill Kurfirst Bo Zhang
DPD Staff Present:	Lucas de Herrera

SITE & VICINITY

The project site is located at the intersection of 5th Avenue and John Street in the Uptown Urban Center, which is comprised of large office buildings, hotels, multi-family apartment buildings and many commercial areas.

Street frontage along both streets (5th Ave and John Sts) is 120'. The site is a corner lot and abuts a 16' paved alley to the east.

Just north of the site, the Seattle Center, which contains several landmarks and the Experience Music Project border the west



side of 5th Avenue. Fischer Plaza is across the street to the west. A hotel and a surface parking lot are to the east. The newly constructed Gates Foundation is located further north of the site and various commercial buildings and restaurants are located south of the site. The site is within walking distance to many forms of public transportation, including the monorail, which runs north - south along 5th Avenue, directly adjacent to the west side of the site. There are many bus routes that are located within blocks of the site and there is a large amount of pedestrian activity that is present in the area.

The project site is located in a Seattle Mixed (SM-85) zone that spans many blocks north of John St and also many blocks east from Broad St. Zoning to the south is a mix of DMR and DMC zones of varying heights from 65' to 340'. To the west (Seattle Center) the zoning is NC3-85.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is to construct a new 7-story building with approximately 106 - 112 apartment units and 85 - 87 enclosed parking stalls. A below grade parking garage housing a majority of the stalls is accessed from the alley. A small number of stalls located along the alley at the first floor will be accessed via a separate driveway from the alley. The ground floor proposes live/work units, the building lobby and residential amenity spaces with the apartment units beginning on Level 2.

DESIGN PRESENTATION

The presentation included the site context summarizing the zoning, surrounding development and three design schemes. Alley access is proposed for all three options. No design departures from development standard are anticipated for any of the design options. Massing, courtyard location, natural light and views are the variables that distinguish the three options:

Option 1

- Corner lobby with entry recess at 5th Avenue and John Street
- Live/Work units along 5th Avenue
- Residential courtyard on Level 2, elevated above alley
- Rooftop deck provided for amenity space

Option 2

- Live/Work units along 5th Avenue
- Residential courtyard on Level 2, elevated above 5th Avenue
- Rooftop deck provided for amenity space

Option 3

- Corner lobby with small entry plaza at 5th Avenue and John Street.
- Live/Work units along 5th Avenue.
- Central residential courtyard enclosed by residential units.
- Rooftop deck provided for amenity space.

The EDG Proposal (pdf) is available online through the Design Review website:
<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/AppDocs/GroupMeetings/DRProposal3012943AgendaID3513.pdf>

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 100 members of the public attended the EDG meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Architectural inspiration examples don't fit at this location, the color and materials are off.
- Natural light is a concern and bad open space.
- Shading of any of the courtyards is likely. Further articulation is necessary for the boxy structure.
- Shadows will be an issue on the south façade.
- The Scenic View of the Monorail is being slowly being compromised.
- The proponent should review of classic architecture moving down Denny Way.
- This design doesn't fit with the context.
- The clown head on the existing structure should be used in the proposal.
- Entries should be recessed from the street.
- Live work entries should be recessed further from the street.
- Ride the Duck location and function can be an issue for the proposed residences.
- Traffic and parking are issues here; there is a lack of neighborhood services, residential uses are not appropriate for this area.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, the West Design Review Board members provided the siting and design guidance described below. The Board identified design guidelines found in the City of Seattle's [Citywide Design Review Guidelines for Commercial and Multifamily Buildings](#) and [Neighborhood Specific Design Guidelines \(Uptown\)](#) of highest priority to this project.

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.

Uptown Supplemental Guidance

Throughout Uptown new developments should, to the extent possible, be sited to further contribute to the neighborhood's pedestrian character. In the Uptown Urban and Heart of Uptown character areas encourage outdoor dining areas utilizing sidewalks and areas adjacent to sidewalks. Outdoor dining is especially encouraged for sites on block faces with southern exposure.

Siting of the commercial/live-work uses and residential clubhouse amenity space need to consider the future planning of the area involving the work associate with the Seattle Tunnel and neighborhood planning for the character of 5th Ave and John St. Different treatment of both streets should be used based on the future plans for each street.

The ability to have openings and fenestration on the north façade due to an existing easement is a unique opportunity for further articulation and detailing. It is unusual to have an urban commercial site (non full block) with three highly visible facades. Take advantage of this condition along the north façade with landscaping, setback, fenestration, color or other features.

The design should provide a subtle design response to the monorail and embrace views to the site from the Monorail. The three facades should relate to the surroundings. The Board supported the proposed rooftop amenity and encouraged taking advantage of views.

Staff Comment

Flipping the upper floor plans would allow a penetration through the north wall for the extended corridors and would provide great views to the Space Needle and EMP.

A-2 Streetscape Compatibility

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

Uptown Supplemental Guidance

Throughout Uptown developments that respond outward to the public realm are preferred.

- ***Site outdoor spaces in accordance with the location and scale of adjacent streets, buildings, and uses. For example, an on-site plaza should not unduly interrupt the retail continuity of a street.***
- ***Locate plazas intended for public use at or near grade to promote both a physical and visual connection to the street. Special paving materials, landscaping, and other elements can be used to provide a clear definition between the public and private realms.***
- ***Define outdoor spaces through a combination of building and landscaping, and discourage oversized spaces that lack containment.***

Streetscape compatibility is a challenge with the proposed live-work and residential clubhouse uses at street level. Live-work use interaction with the street is concerning to the Board, particularly how competing treatments for security and retail visibility can be applied while activating the streetscape.

Details of the corner entry should adhere to the specific guidance for the Uptown Guidelines (See A-10), which directly addresses corner lot situations.

A more generous public realm was requested, such as including greater setbacks.

A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street

Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street

Uptown Supplemental Guidance

Throughout Uptown, major entrances to developments should be prominent. The use of distinctive designs with historical references is strongly encouraged. Design, detailing, materials and landscaping may all be employed to this end. Building addresses and names (if applicable) should be located at entrances, tastefully crafted. Streets throughout Uptown should be sociable places that offer a sense of security, and residential building projects should make a positive contribution to life on the street.

Live work entry design, security and treatments are of concern especially if the spaces are converted to traditional commercial spaces in the future. A conceptual plan for the possible future conversion of the live-work units to traditional retail should be detailed at the Recommendation meeting.

A-4 Human Activity

New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.

Uptown Supplemental Guidance

Throughout Uptown encourage outdoor dining.

Pedestrian activity in the area is plentiful and will intensify with major developments currently underway and planned for the area. At the recommendation meeting, the pedestrian experience along both streets should be detailed with vignettes showing materials, scale and materials from a pedestrian's perspective. Explore shifting the live work units to 5th Ave.

A-10 Corner Lots

Buildings on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.

Uptown Supplemental Guidance

Corner Lots in Uptown

Generally, buildings within Uptown should meet the corner and not be set back. Building designs and treatments as well as any open space areas should address the corner and promote activity.

Corner entrances are strongly encouraged, where feasible. Corner lots are often desirable locations for small publicly-accessible plazas, turrets, clock towers, art, and other special features. Design corner retail entries to not disrupt access to residential uses above.

The Board supports the proposed corner entry and expects to review further articulation details at the recommendation meeting, see A-4 above. Enhancing and expanding the naturally lit courtyard to complement the grand corner entry is a priority. The Board would like to see further development of the natural light theme including a more generous central courtyard and the naturally vented view corridors proposed in the apartment levels.

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.

Uptown Supplemental Guidance

The Uptown Urban character area embraces high quality urban infill, and responds to special relationships with nearby civic institutions. The following features are encouraged:

- ***Consistent street wall;***
- ***Engaging the sidewalk / storefront transparency;***
- ***Building siting that responds to Seattle Center entry points;***
- ***Defined cornices;***
- ***High quality, durable materials;***
- ***Distinct residential and commercial components; and***
- ***Throughout Uptown, upper level balconies are discouraged on the street side of residential buildings. Bay windows are a preferred architectural element on the street side. This guideline is intended to avoid open displays of storage, which are sometimes an unintended consequence of street side balconies.***

With the EMP, Gates Foundation and Seattle Center, architectural context is rich; therefore The Board noted the proposed design should complement these developments not compete with them. The Board suggested studying the hotel proposal at 416 John St (DPD # 3012431) for information and ideas of how to respond to the context.

Articulate the structure further to avoid creating a blocky building.

C-4 Exterior Finish Materials

Building materials 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.

Uptown Supplemental Guidance

Throughout Uptown, decorative exterior treatments using brick, tile, and/or other interesting exterior finish materials are strongly preferred. Quality exterior finish materials should be incorporated at all levels and on all exterior walls. Use materials, colors, and details to unify a

building's appearance; buildings and structures should be built of compatible materials on all sides.

Visibility of the site is high; use of strong materials that will weather well is a priority. This development and the proposed hotel cited above will establish a precedent for future developments of this 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.

Uptown Supplemental Guidance

Within the Uptown Park character area landscaping (e.g., trellised climbing plants and other urban greenery) is the preferred treatment for walls. Larger wall areas should include landscaped treatments at the wall or between the wall and public rights-of-way, but not in a manner that would create unsafe conditions (e.g., create hiding spaces or provide exterior access to higher floors). In the Uptown Urban and Heart of Uptown character areas artwork and decorative surfacing may provide an alternative wall treatment to landscaping in some locations. However, painted murals are the least preferred solution to larger wall areas in Uptown.

D-7 Personal Safety and Security

Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.

Safety and visibility including transparency along the alley are important. Live work units should provide privacy and safety for tenants, but also be able to function as retail. The “Trio” development at 3104 Western Ave is good example of appropriate treatment for live-work on urban street fronts.

D-8 Treatment of Alleys

The design of alley entrances should enhance the pedestrian street front.

Uptown Supplemental Guidance

In Heart of Uptown and Uptown Urban character areas encourage alleys to be activated with subordinate retail spaces at the mouth of the alley. Encourage retail to “turn the corner” at alley entrances.

Conflict between pedestrians on John St with cars leaving the alley needs to be addressed. Design of the structure at the alley needs to provide high visibility when exiting the garage and alley. A “sight triangle” function should be provided by eroding the building or providing transparency, mirrors are not appropriate.

D-10 Commercial Lighting

Signs should add interest to the street front environment and should be appropriate for the scale and character desired in the area.

Uptown Supplemental Guidance

Uptown accommodates shopping and eating experiences during the dark hours of the Northwest's late fall, winter, and early spring. Pedestrian area lighting is an important feature of each block in the Uptown Urban character area, and the Heart of Uptown character area.

Use of pedestrian scaled lighting is crucial.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

None

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EDG meeting, the Board recommended the project should proceed with a Master Use Permit.

Master Use Permit applicant submittal instructions are attached separately.
