



City of Seattle

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



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE #1 OF THE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3014195

Address: 1700 1st Avenue S (Seattle Arena)

Applicant: Jack McCullough for WSA Properties III, LLC

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, November 27, 2012

Board Members Present: Gabe Grant (Chair)
Mathew Albores
Pragnesh Parikh
Gundala Proksch
Brian D. Scott

Board Members Absent: None

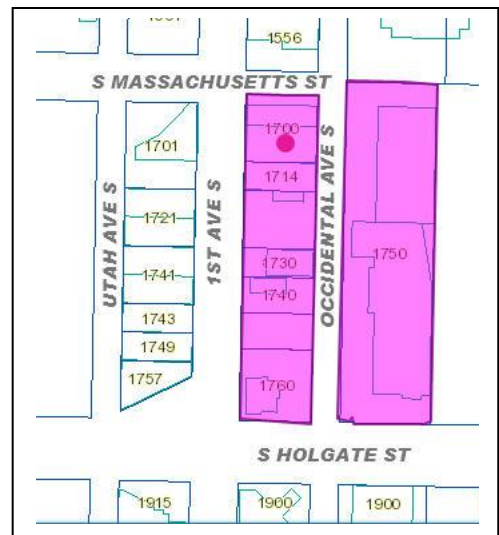
DPD Staff Present: Garry Papers, Senior Land Use Planner (Design Review)
John Shaw, Senior Transportation Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Industrial Commercial (IC-85 ft)
Stadium Transition Overlay

Nearby Zones: (North) IC-85
(South) IG2 U/85 & IG1 U/85
(East) IG2 U/85
(West) IC-85

Lot Area: 276,000 sf (approx 397ft x 680 ft)
(including Occidental Ave ROW)



Current Development: One story warehouse along east edge, fronting railroad yard. Four structures along S 1st Ave, 1-2 stories tall, with surface parking. Brick and asphalt paved Occidental Ave S running north-south through middle of site.

Access: Vehicular access from S Holgate, S 1st, and currently Occidental to the north; no access from the east which is railroad property.

Surrounding Development: Mixed commercial and office buildings, 1-5 stories to north, south and west, mixed in with surface parking. A 5 level parking structure for Safeco Field is adjacent to the northeast. Railroad yards to the east.

ECAs: Liquefaction Prone Soils (entire site)

Neighborhood Character: 1st Ave is fairly consistently lined with masonry and concrete structures between 2-5 stories, for multiple blocks north and south; railroad yards and support structures to the east and southeast up to 3rd Avenue; Safeco parking structure and stadium on blocks to north; mixed commercial on 1st Avenue to west, with container cranes, Rt 99 and Port lands behind to the west.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Future construction of an approximately 725,000 sf, 18,000 – 20,000-seat private spectator sports facility (Seattle Arena). Project includes demolition of eight existing structures of approximately 128,087 sf, and grading will occur for construction. Proposal includes venue-related commercial development at the site (such as team merchandise stores, ticket offices, team offices, and potentially restaurants and club spaces). Occidental Ave S between S Holgate and S Massachusetts is proposed to be vacated. Required parking for the facility is proposed to be provided by commercial parking lots off the site.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: November 27, 2012

Due to the large project scale and unique program, this Early Design Guidance (EDG) review is divided into 2 meetings: EDG #1 focuses on Context/Urban Analysis and Standard Arena Programming. Herein, the Downtown Design Review Board (DRB) offered preliminary response and comments on those issues, to inform the applicant in the development of massing options. More detailed studies will be presented at EDG #2.

EDG #2 is scheduled for Tuesday, December 11, 2012, where the DRB will provide typical EDG feedback and guidance, including identifying Priority Guidelines and Departures.

APPLICANT PRESENTATION

The EDG packet includes materials presented at the EDG meeting, and is available online by entering the project number at this website:

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp.

or contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

Address: Public Resource Center
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
Seattle, WA 98124

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 40 members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Noted the adjacent parking structure has important access drives and vehicle queuing locations that should be shown on context drawings.
- Stated that major truck routes along Edgar Martinez and Holgate/Atlantic might pose constraints on the project site, and its loading functions.
- Noted that Safeco Field to the north has 4 spectator entry points, one at each corner.
- Noted the presentation did not mention parking; applicants responded that all required parking will be provided at off-site locations, to be determined and finalized later.
- Noted that a building of this scale is rare, and the project should fit and define its context, and set the future tone for the district.
- Encouraged the project to be both respectful, contextual, and support the ground level, and be something inspiring, striking and not hide the arena functions.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, understanding the program factors as presented, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following overall siting, program and design guidance. Relevant guidelines are referenced by **letter/number** when applicable. For reference, the Downtown Guidelines are summarized at the end of this report. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

1. **Overview:** The Board discussed the vision for the surrounding district, and the specific role this facility should play in this context:
 - a) The arena will be a public landmark and should provide public amenities and spirit.
 - b) The vicinity is urbanizing, maturing, and pedestrian volumes will increase to balance out the existing vehicle bias; this project should reinforce pedestrian scale. **(C-1)**

- c) Building and site should incorporate best-practice sustainability features, which exploit and express the unique scale and visibility of an arena; eg large roof area for rainwater harvesting and/or treatment, and/or Photo-voltaic panels.
 - d) Innovation, technology and forward-thinking should be expressed in the facility, as they are a hallmark of the Seattle identity. **(A-1)**
 - e) Besides the approximately 150 arena events/year (with basketball and hockey in winter/spring), the building, its uses, and public spaces should contribute to the district year round, and when no events are occurring. A full-year event schedule should be provided.
2. **Context Response:** The Board emphasized the arena should be much more than another big stadium object which is vacant and lifeless when no event is happening.
- a) 1st Avenue is a vital street north AND south of the site, with a consistent, mixed-use, fine-grain street wall connecting diverse destinations. The arena is in the middle of this street, and should provide continuity and reinforce its urban, pedestrian attributes. **(B-3)**
 - b) Besides 1st Avenue and south, the facility should anticipate pedestrian movement and other access from the east along Holgate, and north from E Martinez, as the district to the east evolves. Bus, light rail and other modes may also come from the east.**(B-1)**
 - c) Parking locations and resulting pedestrian flows to the arena are important influences on the building design, entries etc. If those parking locations are not established or permanent, then the building entries and pedestrian flows should provide suitable flexibility for future changes and possible connections. **(E-2)**
 - d) Especially since no on-site parking is provided, pedestrians will arrive from all directions based on variable rates and lot availability. The applicants should examine pedestrian flows and where access is expected, with estimated quantities for each flow (totaling 20,000). **(C-4)**
 - e) Provide all available mode data and access/departure directions from the 2 existing stadiums to the north.
 - f) Since event patrons may arrive via shuttle buses and other modes, consider site planning for bus layovers and other event needs besides pedestrians.
3. **Massing & Architectural Concept:** The Board agreed the project must be both fabric, contextual, and street supportive, AND be a landmark, with a memorable character that is uniquely Seattle.
- a) Plazas and public amenities should create strong place-making, provide generous before/after celebration space, and be available during non-event times. **(D-1)**
 - b) The project should express a memorable roof image and/or profile, to respond to prominent views from afar (ferries, hills, trains, downtown, etc.). **(A-2)**
 - c) While the primary concourse level may end up elevated above grade, the typical vertical transition of steep stairs and escalators should be mitigated, and other options explored, that smooth those transitions and create special places. **(D-3)**

- d) Specific (eg Rainier) and general (eg downtown) views out from the upper levels should be provided and celebrated, and encourage some upper level view terraces that are open to public at all times or at least during non-event times. **(A-1)**
 - e) The generic arena program (as presented) suggests an omni-directional approach to concourses and vertical circulation, yet this site is constrained east-west; this arena should respond to that constraint, and not appear “forced” onto the site. **(B-2)**
 - f) The east façade facing the railroad tracks is very visible and should have a deliberate, scaled design treatment; it should anticipate potential, future access bridges or decks from the east. **(C-3)**
4. **Streetscape and Public Realm:** The ground level treatment, especially along 1st Avenue, should be pedestrian scale with active uses, and public spaces should be located and scaled to accommodate crowd gathering and flows, especially at intersections.
- a) All street edges should be permeable and activated with uses that serve both internal and street customers, and are a diverse mix, not simply team or event related; ‘a new idea’ about arena amenities that support the neighborhood full-time. **(C-1)**
 - b) The movement of large crowds and dispersing onto active streets should be choreographed and moderated to not overwhelm infrastructure, and the facility design should emphasize an “experiential” more than consumer approach.
 - c) All service areas should be hidden and curb cuts/service doors consolidated to minimize pedestrian impacts. **(E-1)**
 - d) The base of the building should stitch the district fabric together, but not copy or mimic a historic style. **(C-2)**
 - e) Occidental Avenue has possibilities as a shared, flexible plaza space, but terminates into Safeco field and has no crosswalks there; pedestrians must jog back to 1st Avenue. Consider pedestrian gatherings and flows in multiple directions. **(D-1)**
- 5) **Presentations:** The Board stressed the required 3 options should be genuinely different alternatives of equivalent programs; not variations on one theme, or obviously infeasible options. They also encouraged diagrams and drawings that display the design evolution.

Council-adopted Downtown Design Guidelines – summary checklist

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.**
- A-2 Enhance the Skyline. Design the upper portion of the building to promote visual interest and variety in the downtown skyline.**

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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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.
- 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.
- C-3 Provide Active—Not Blank—Facades.** Buildings should not have large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks.
- C-4 Reinforce Building Entries.** To promote pedestrian comfort, safety, and orientation, reinforce the building's entry.

- 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.
- 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.

D. Public Amenities

Enhancing the Streetscape & Open Space

- D-1 **Provide Inviting & Usable Open Space.** Design public open spaces to promote a visually pleasing, safe, and active environment for workers, residents, and visitors. Views and solar access from the principal area of the open space should be especially emphasized.
- 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.
- 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.
- D-4 **Provide Appropriate Signage.** Design signage appropriate for the scale and character of the project and immediate neighborhood. All signs should be oriented to pedestrians and/or persons in vehicles on streets within the immediate neighborhood.
- 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.
- 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.

E. Vehicular Access & Parking

Minimizing the Adverse Impacts

- E-1 Minimize Curb Cut Impacts. Minimize adverse impacts of curb cuts on the safety and comfort of pedestrians.**

- 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.**

- 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.**

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

This EDG did not present any Departures, but they may be discovered and shown at subsequent meetings.

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.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EDG meeting, the Board thanked the applicants for a complete presentation, and looked forward to the EDG #2 meeting on Tuesday, 11.December, 2012