



FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE WEST (QUEEN ANNE/ MAGNOLIA) DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3014207

Address: 234 9th Ave N

Applicant: Kirsten Murray of Olson Kundig Architects for Point 32 and R2H2 LLC

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, November 12, 2014

Board Members Present: Mindy Black
Christine Harrington
Katie Idziorek
Boyd Pickrell
Janet Stephenson

DPD Staff Present: Bruce P. Rips

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Seattle Mixed with a height limit of 85 to 240' depending upon the use (SM-160/85-240)

Nearby Zones: North: SM-160/85-240
South: SM-160/85-240
East: SM-160/85-240
West: SM-160/85-240

Lot Area: 21,600 square feet

Current Development: Three, one-story early 20th century commercial structures and surface parking at the alley.

Access: Existing parking is located adjacent to the alley with all vehicular access from the alley.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood: Newer 6 story office, institutional, and residential buildings are located nearby, predominantly to the north and west. Additional proposed developments in these areas are going through design review and permitting. Older buildings include 1-2 story early 20th century and



Character: mid-century commercial buildings, and early 20th century residential buildings. A few surface parking lots are located nearby.

The site is located adjacent to a one-story early 20th century commercial building with a surface parking lot further to the south. Early and mid-20th century commercial structures are located across the street to the west. An early 20th century 2 story commercial structure is located to the north, with a multi-story newer biotech building located to the northeast. Across the alley is the 14-year old Sellen Construction building.

This site is located near the southwest edge of the larger South Lake Union neighborhood, and is referred to as the Denny Park area. The area possesses a diverse mix of buildings and uses.

Denny Park is located one block to the south. Westlake Ave N is located one block to the east, with the streetcar and transit service. Dexter Ave N. is located two blocks to the west and includes a high level of cyclist, vehicle and transit traffic connecting downtown with areas north of the Ship Canal. A few blocks further to the north, the busy arterials of Mercer and Broad Streets provide a clear break with the rest of the South Lake Union neighborhood.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a 12 story structure containing 15,564 sq. ft. of general sales and services, 149,380 sq. ft. of office use and one residential unit. Parking for 158 vehicles would be provided in a below grade garage accessed from the alley.

PUBLIC COMMENT

One member of the public affixed his name to the Recommendation meeting sign-in sheet. The speaker expressed enthusiasm for the project.

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.

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The Board identified the following Citywide Design Guidelines & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

- 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.**

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- Encourage provision of “outlooks and overlooks” for the public to view the lake and cityscapes. Examples include provision of public plazas and/or other public open spaces and changing the form or facade setbacks of the building to enhance opportunities for views.
- Minimize shadow impacts to Cascade Park.
- New development is encouraged to take advantage of site configuration to accomplish sustainability goals. The Board is generally willing to recommend departures from development standards if they are needed to achieve sustainable design. Refer to the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design*(LEED) manual which provides additional information. Examples include:
 - Solar orientation
 - Storm water run-off, detention and filtration systems
 - Sustainable landscaping
 - Versatile building design for entire building life cycle

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

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

The vision for street level uses in South Lake Union is a completed network of sidewalks that successfully accommodate pedestrians. Streetscape compatibility is a high priority of the neighborhood with redevelopment. Sidewalk-related spaces should appear safe, welcoming and open to the general public.

- Provide pedestrian-friendly streetscape amenities, such as: tree grates; benches; lighting.
- Encourage provision of spaces for street level uses that vary in size, width, and depth. Encourage the use of awnings and weather protection along street fronts to enhance the pedestrian environment.
- Where appropriate, consider a reduction in the required amount of commercial and retail space at the ground level, such as in transition zones between commercial and residential areas. Place retail in areas that are conducive to the use and will be successful.
- Where appropriate, configure retail space so that it can spill-out onto the sidewalk (retaining six feet for pedestrian movement, where the sidewalk is sufficiently wide).

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

Discussion lighted upon the unprepossessing quality of the Ninth Ave entrance--- the lack of landscaping, furniture etc. The Board agreed with the desire to install accent paving in front of the entrance as shown in the Recommendation booklet. This will help differentiate the primary entrance from others on Ninth Ave.

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

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- Create graceful transitions at the streetscape level between the public and private uses.
- Keep neighborhood connections open, and discourage closed campuses.
- Design facades to encourage activity to spill out from business onto the sidewalk, and vice-versa.
- Reinforce pedestrian connections both within the neighborhood and to other adjacent neighborhoods. Transportation infrastructure should be designed with adjacent sidewalks, as development occurs to enhance pedestrian connectivity.
- Reinforce retail concentrations with compatible spaces that encourage pedestrian activity.
- Create businesses and community activity clusters through co-location of retail and pedestrian uses as well as other high pedestrian traffic opportunities.
- Design for a network of safe and well-lit connections to encourage human activity and link existing high activity areas.

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.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- Address both the pedestrian and auto experience through building placement, scale and details with specific attention to regional transportation corridors such as Mercer, Aurora, Fairview and Westlake. These locations, pending changes in traffic patterns, may evolve with transportation improvements.
- Encourage stepping back an elevation at upper levels for development taller than 55 feet to take advantage of views and increase sunlight at street level. Where stepping back upper floors is not practical or appropriate other design considerations may be considered, such as modulations or separations between structures.
- Relate proportions of buildings to the width and scale of the street.
- Articulate the building facades vertically or horizontally in intervals that relate to the existing structures or existing pattern of development in the vicinity.
- Consider using architectural features to reduce building scale such as: landscaping; trellis; complementary materials; detailing; accent trim.

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.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- Support the existing fine-grained character of the neighborhood with a mix of building styles.
- Re-use and preserve important buildings and landmarks when possible.
- Expose historic signs and vintage advertising on buildings where possible.
- Respond to the history and character in the adjacent vicinity in terms of patterns, style, and scale. Encourage historic character to be revealed and reclaimed, for example through use of community artifacts, and historic materials, forms and textures.
- Respond to the working class, maritime, commercial and industrial character of the Waterfront and Westlake areas. Examples of elements to consider include: window detail patterns; open bay doors; sloped roofs.
- Respond to the unique, grass roots, sustainable character of the Cascade neighborhood. Examples of elements to consider include: community artwork; edible gardens; water filtration systems that serve as pedestrian amenities; gutters that support greenery.

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.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

Design the “fifth elevation” — the roofscape — in addition to the streetscape. As this area topographically is a valley, the roofs may be viewed from locations outside the neighborhood such as the freeway and Space Needle. Therefore, views from outside the area as well as from within the neighborhood should be considered, and roof-top elements should be organized to minimize view impacts from the freeway and elevated areas.

The north elevation received unanimous praise from the Board. The other facades generated considerable debate as to their design merits as they possess less variety and interest than the north elevation. The east façade with its visibility from Westlake requires changes to appear less monolithic. It ought to have greater amounts of glazing to produce a more compelling presence. In addition to the added transparency, consider using such attributes as texture and alterations to the roof height. The applicant will work with city land use staff to review and approve changes to this elevation.

Deliberation also dwelled on the west and south facades. The play of solid and void relationships defining the structure's northwest corner, the visibility of the diagonal bracing and the projection of the penthouse residential unit should generate enough visual interest on the upper west elevation. The south wall has the least amount of visibility. The Board did not recommend revisions to either the west or south elevations.

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

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.

Noting the close proximity of the canopy and street trees along Ninth Ave, the Board observed the potential conflict of these important elements along the streetscape. The development team will need to work with DPD planning staff to arrive at a solution. The canopies cannot be removed from the project; however the dimensions of the canopy and the placement of the trees or the selection of trees can be modified during design development with the approval of DPD.

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.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- **New developments are encouraged to work with the Design Review Board and interested citizens to provide features that enhance the public realm, i.e. the transition zone between private property and the public right of way. The Board is generally willing to consider a departure in open space requirements if the project proponent provides an acceptable plan for features such as: curb bulbs adjacent to active retail spaces where they are not interfering with primary corridors that are designated for high levels of traffic flow; pedestrian-oriented street lighting; street furniture.**

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.

Conveying reservations on whether the loading berth could enable van and truck access in the alley, the Board directed DPD staff to review the turning radius into the two loading berths. Adjustments would potentially need to be made to

accommodate trucks prior to city staff enabling the proposed changes to the loading areas. The Board members also encouraged the applicant to secure short term parking on Ninth Ave to provide loading and unloading.

D-8 Treatment of Alleys. The design of alley entrances should enhance the pedestrian street front.

Ensure the installation of the paving treatment as shown in the meeting booklet at the building's alley entrance. This provides the continuity between the primary Ninth Ave entry (see Guidance for A-3), the internal mid-block connection and the alley entrance which has access to Westlake Ave.

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.

Improve the quality of the lighting along the lower east façade between the sidewalk and the alley entrance. This should ensure a safer alley for both pedestrians and vehicles.

The Board supports the architect's intent to light the board formed concrete wall fronting the Thomas St. sidewalk. To ensure the installation of lighting in this location, this Board recommends approval of a condition in the MUP Decision.

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.

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.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- Support the creation of a hierarchy of passive and active open space within South Lake Union. This may include pooling open space requirements on-site to create larger spaces.
- Encourage landscaping that meets LEED criteria. This is a priority in the Cascade neighborhood.
- Where appropriate, install indigenous trees and plants to improve aesthetics, capture water and create habitat.
- Retain existing, non-intrusive mature trees or replace with large caliper trees.
- Water features are encouraged including natural marsh-like installations.
- Reference the City of Seattle Right Tree Book and the City Light Streetscape Light Standards Manual for appropriate landscaping and lighting options for the area.

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.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- **Consider integrating artwork into publicly accessible areas of a building and landscape that evokes a sense of place related to the previous uses of the area. Neighborhood themes may include service industries such as laundries, auto row, floral businesses, photography district, arts district, maritime, etc.**

A raised porch or stoop extends parallel to the Thomas St. sidewalk establishing an intermediary exterior zone between the right of way and the retail development fronting the street. Its presence recalls loading docks for train loading in older warehouse districts which have been converted over the years into outdoor cafes or amenity spaces. Due to the change in grade, the height of the stoop increases as it approaches the alley. Discussion focused primarily on the two sets of steps and the challenges posed by the porch's height. The deliberation resulted in two conditions modifying the steps or areas adjacent to them. First, shift the steps away from the alley by at least two feet to ensure the safety of pedestrians exiting the porch and entering the alley. In addition, eliminate the low wall facing the sidewalk to express or reveal the risers and treads in elevation. Second, increase the area between the last riser and the retail space to enhance circulation along the porch at the wider steps closer to the corner of Ninth and Thomas.

Recommendations: The recommendations summarized below were based on the plans and models submitted at the November 12th, 2014 meeting. Design, siting or architectural details not specifically identified or altered in these recommendations are expected to remain as presented in the plans and other drawings available at the November 12th, 2014 public meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities, and reviewing the plans and renderings, the Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design and the requested development standard departures from the requirements of the Land Use Code (listed below). The Board recommends the following CONDITIONS for the project. (Authority referred in the letter and number in parenthesis):

- 1) Ensure the installation of accent paving in front of the primary Ninth Ave. entrance as shown in the Recommendation booklet. This will help differentiate the primary entrance from other entries on Ninth Ave. (A-3)
- 2) Increase the amount of glazing on the east elevation to produce a more compelling presence from Westlake. In addition to the added transparency, consider using such as attributes as texture and alterations to the roof height or line. The applicant will work with city land use staff to review and approve changes to this elevation. (C-2)
- 3) Avoid potential conflict between the overhead weather protection and the street trees along Ninth Ave. Work with DPD and SDOT staffs to arrive at a solution that

ensures that the canopies' installation. Dimensions of the canopy and the placement or selection of trees can be altered during design development with the approval of DPD. (C-5)

- 4) Ensure the installation of the alley entrance paving treatment as shown in the Recommendation meeting booklet. This provides the continuity between the primary Ninth Ave entry, the internal mid-block connection and the alley entrance which has access to Westlake Ave. (D-8)
- 5) Improve the quality of the lighting along the lower east façade between the sidewalk and the alley entrance to ensure a safer alley for both pedestrians and vehicles. (D-10)
- 6) Ensure the intent to light the board formed concrete wall fronting the Thomas St. sidewalk. (D-10)
- 7) Shift the exterior steps away from the alley by at least two feet to ensure the safety of pedestrians exiting the porch and entering the alley. In addition, eliminate the low wall facing the sidewalk to reveal the risers and treads in elevation.. (E-2)
- 8) Increase the area between the last riser and the retail space to enhance circulation along the porch at the wider steps near the corner of Ninth and Thomas. (E-2)

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendations on the requested departure(s) are 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).

STANDARD	REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	JUSTIFICATION	RECOMMENDATION
1. Street Level Development Standards SMC 23.48.014	Except on Class I pedestrian streets, as shown on map B, structures may be set back up to 12' from the property line subject to the setback shall be landscaped according to the provisions of SMC 23.48.024. A maximum 30% of the area can be hardscape.	Proposes 94% hardscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides a 117.75' long stoop or porch mediating between the commercial spaces and the Thomas St. sidewalk. 	Recommended Approval.

The packet includes materials presented at the 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.

The packet is also available to view in the 3014207 file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

Mailing Public Resource Center
Address: 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
 P.O. Box 34019
 Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

Ripsb/doc/design review/REC.3014207.docx