



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

Project Number: 3014287

Address: 601 Westlake Ave N.

Applicant: Architect Perkins Will; Applicant Jodi Patterson O'Hare for City Investors LLC

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, June 12, 2013

Board Members Present: Mindy Black (Chair)  
Magdalena Hogness  
Katherine Idziorek  
Jill Kurfirst  
Boyd Pickrell  
Janet Stephenson

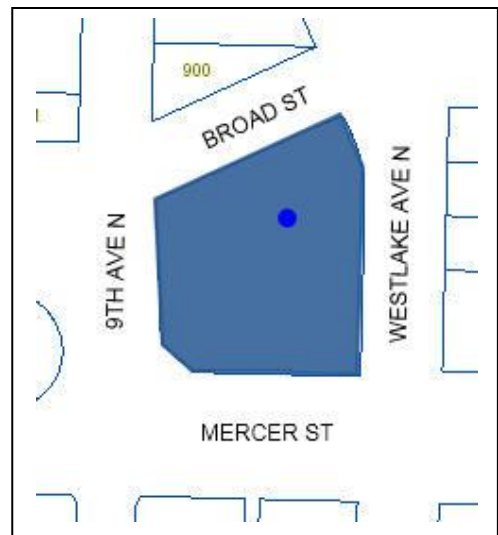
DPD Staff Present: Tami Garrett, Land Use Planner, substituting for Shelley Bolser

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Current zoning is SM 85/65-160 (this application is proceeding with process to vest to previous SM-65 zoning)

Nearby Zones: (North) SM 85/65-160  
(South) SM 160/85-240  
(East) SM 85/65-160  
(West) SM 85/65-160

Lot Area: 53,873 square feet



The site includes an entire block bounded by Westlake Ave N, Mercer St, 9th Ave N, and Broad St, and is located one block south of Lake Union. The site is occupied by a biofuel station, surface parking, and construction staging areas.

**Current**

**Development:** The site previously included two historic landmark buildings (Ford McKay and Pacific McKay). These historic landmarks were deconstructed and are currently stored off site. The historic landmarks would be reassembled on site and incorporated into the proposed development.

**Access:** Existing vehicular access is via curb cuts from adjacent street frontages.

The surrounding development is a mix of uses and age of structures. Across the street to the south is a recently reviewed MUP for two structures and an alley vacation (MUPs 3012563 and 3012560). Across the street to the southwest are the UW Medicine buildings.

**Surrounding  
Development  
and**

Across the street to the west and east, the extensive Mercer Way improvements and changes to Broad Street are underway. These areas are occupied mainly by surface parking and construction staging. The block to the west will include landscaped open space after the Mercer Way improvements are complete.

**Neighborhood  
Character:**

Across the street to the north and northwest are early 20th century 1-2 story buildings that include a variety of restaurants and sales and service uses.

Recreational opportunities include South Lake Union Park to the north and Cascade Playground a few blocks to the east.

The area offers frequent transit service, including the South Lake Union Streetcar adjacent to the west side site and several nearby bus routes. 9th Ave N has been designated as a future bicycle route.

**ECAs:** A Liquefaction Environmentally Critical Area is located on this site.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposal includes a 6-story structure containing 240,000 square feet of research space, 8,000 square feet of commercial space, with retail space at ground level. Parking for 240 vehicles would be provided below grade, accessed from a curb cut at Broad Street. This proposal is a major revision to the previously approved design review, conducted under MUP 3009234.

## **DESIGN PRESENTATION**

The EDG packet includes materials presented at the EDG meeting, and is available online by entering the project number(s) (3014287) at this website:

[http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design\\_Review\\_Program/Project\\_Reviews/Reports/default.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp).

The EDG packet is also available to view in the 3014287 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](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

The applicant noted that an auditorium lobby is proposed at the northeast corner street level, with transparent street level façade at Westlake Ave N. "Media walls" would be located on a portion of the Broad Street frontage and most of the 9<sup>th</sup> Ave N street frontage, due to the need to control daylight into the laboratory spaces behind those facades.

The proposed street level uses on Westlake Ave N include a possible art gallery located within the historic landmark structures, a coffee shop, the primary building entry, and the lobby for the auditorium.

A triangular outdoor plaza is proposed adjacent to the south façade and Mercer Street. A portion of this plaza would be covered by cantilevered upper floors, and the plaza would include water features and seating. Green roof areas are proposed at the second floor, with a possible outdoor terrace at the second story behind the Ford McKay façade on Westlake Ave N. A building entry plaza with bike racks and seating is proposed at the Westlake Ave N. entry.

The applicant noted that intent of the overall design concept is to continue and enhance the horizontal expression of the historic landmarks, and is a response to the advice of the Architectural Review Committee that considers the design relationship to the landmark structures.

The Ford McKay landmark terracotta façade has been preserved. The façade is proposed at the property line, with the new structure recessed behind the façade. This arrangement results in making the north edge of this façade visible at the street level. The applicant noted that a glazed wall could connect the historic terracotta façade with the proposed new development. The Pacific McKay building includes the entire structure, rather than just the facade.

Materials in the new structure may include contemporary terra cotta rain screen, to reflect and contrast with the historic structures' materials (glazed terracotta).

In response to Board question, the applicant noted that all the trash collection and loading would be located on the first level of below grade parking.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments or questions were offered at the EDG meeting.

<b>INITIAL RECOMMENDATION MEETING: June 12, 2013</b>
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#### **DESIGN PRESENTATION**

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#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments or questions were offered at the Initial Recommendation meeting.

<b>PRIORITIES &amp; BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
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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.

## **EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE (DECEMBER 19, 2012):**

### **1. 9<sup>th</sup> Ave N:**

- a. Bike racks and other cyclist amenities should be located adjacent to all building entries for tenants and visitors. The bicycle amenities, the entries, and the south plaza should be designed to connect the entries to the designated bike route on 9<sup>th</sup> Ave N. (A-2, D-1)
- b. The 9<sup>th</sup> Ave N sidewalk, building design, and amenities should be designed to slow vehicles and cyclists for safety. (D-1, D-7, E-2)
- c. The Board expressed concern about the long blank walls and lack of entries on 9<sup>th</sup> Ave N. The 9<sup>th</sup> Ave N façade should be designed to relate to human scale. (A-4)
  - i. The stair tower and tenant entry on 9<sup>th</sup> Ave should be made transparent, to create a sense of human activity and eyes on the street. (A-4, D-7)
  - ii. The 9<sup>th</sup> Ave N entry is for tenants, but it should be designed to be functional for tenants. The sidewalk area near the 9<sup>th</sup> Ave N entry should include bicyclist amenities and seating areas. (A-4, D-1)
  - iii. Lighting strategies should be used to further enhance transparent areas and wall treatments, and increase safety on 9<sup>th</sup> Ave N. (A-4, D-7)
  - iv. Reduce the area of media wall to the minimum amount necessary for lab function, and make all other areas as transparent and porous as possible. (A-2, D-2)
  - v. Use a human scaled treatment rather than super graphics or institutional scale treatments on the media wall. (A-2, A-4, C-3)
  - vi. The 9<sup>th</sup> Ave N façade should include other efforts to soften the pedestrian experience, such as rain gardens reflective of the project to the south. The landscape and hardscape design on 9<sup>th</sup> Ave N. and Westlake Ave N. should be consistent with the project across Mercer to the south (MUP 3012563 and 3012560). (D-1, E-1, E-2)

### **2. Mercer St:**

- a. The south plaza on Mercer St should be designed to be fully functional for building users and the public. (A-4, D-1)
  - i. Emphasize the Pacific McKay retail building entrance to the plaza. Design the plaza to connect this entry with bike amenities and the 9<sup>th</sup> Ave N bicycle route. (A-2, A-4, D-1, E-2)
  - ii. The south plaza offers the best opportunity for sun exposure. The design should maximize the opportunity of this plaza to activate the street level, by designing the plaza to provide maximum sun exposure as well as protection from inclement weather. (A-1, D-1)
  - iii. The landscape and hardscape should be consistent with the project across Mercer to the south. (E-1)

### **3. Broad St:**

- a. The Board noted that the garage entry is appropriately located on Broad Street. (A-2)

- b. The garage entry should be designed to enhance safety for pedestrians and cyclists. The design of the garage entry area should include visual cues to alert vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists of the need for caution (paving changes, landscaping, etc.) (D-7)

**4. Design Concept:**

- a. The north edge of the Ford McKay building should be carefully designed to mesh this façade well with the proposed new structure. The connections between the historic structures and the new structure will be an important detail of the overall design. (C-2, C-4)
  - i. The Board noted that providing a second floor terrace behind the façade of the Ford McKay building would provide usable open space and enhance human activity near the street frontage. (A-4, D-1)
- b. The Board noted that the historic landmarks have a strong vertical bay expression. The Ford McKay façade includes a thin façade that is proposed proud of the rest of the development.
  - i. The proposed development should be designed to be light and visually ‘lifted’ off the historic structures. The Board noted that strong horizontal banding or other visually weighty expressions in the proposed new structure are discouraged. (C-2, C-4)
  - ii. The Board appreciated the vertical solid ‘ribbon’ adjacent to the primary entry courtyard (visible on page 33 of the EDG packet). This type of strategy could be enhanced to provide a scalar response to the vertical expression in the historic structures. (C-2, C-3)

**INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS (JUNE 12, 2013):**

- 1. **9<sup>th</sup> Ave N Upper Façade:** The Board extensively discussed the treatment of the 9<sup>th</sup> Ave N. façade, and most of the Board members recommended that additional design changes are required to visually break up the length of this façade at the upper levels. (A-2, B-1, C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4)
  - a. The Board discussed several possible treatments, including:
    - i. “Option 2” sunshades shown in the Initial Recommendation packet, combined with lighting to enhance the green stair tower behind the glazed façade;
    - ii. A vertical masonry element to tie the street level and upper level expression, break the visual length, and avoid heat gain on the west façade;
    - iii. Use color on the fins or other use of color in the glazing to visually interrupt the length of the façade; and
    - iv. Use of lighting to enhance any architectural elements at the upper levels;
  - b. The Board noted that the 9<sup>th</sup> Ave N façade should be designed to respond to pedestrian and cyclist scale, given the volume of pedestrians and cyclists on this street.

2. **9<sup>th</sup> Ave N, Street Level Facade:** The Board discussed the design of the media wall as it related to the proposed departure and the overall design concept.
  - a. The Board recommended that the design of the media wall and street level should create a cohesive design concept with whatever treatment is used to reduce the mass at the upper levels. (A-2, C-2, C-3, C-4)
  - b. The media panels should transition to the solid material using a reveal, change in plane, or other means to create a shadow line. (C-2, C-3, C-4)
  - c. Overhead weather protection should be included at all areas of the media wall, to encourage people to linger and strive to meet the transparency intent of human activity on the street. (A-4, D-1)
  - d. The media wall panels should be designed to be easily removed for vision glass, if a future tenant or program offers the opportunity for increased transparency at the street level. (C-2, C-4, D-2, D-11)
  - e. The Board noted support for Concept 1 shown in the packet, since it offers the largest area of media wall panels.
  - f. The Board would like to review a more specific concept for the media wall at the next Recommendation meeting. The graphics should illustrate the specific proposed location and dimensions of the media wall, the nature of the art work (Static? Changing? Frequency of change?), the anticipated method of construction, and a defined concept on which the artwork will be based.
3. **Mercer Street Plaza:** The Board supported the preferred option for this plaza design, as shown in the Initial Recommendation packet. (A-2, D-1, E-2, E-3)
4. **Signage Plan:** The Board stated that the applicant should bring a conceptual signage plan to the next Recommendation meeting. The signage plan should demonstrate the potential location and design of retail tenant signage, as well as the research tenant. (C-2, D-9)

## DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The Board identified the following Citywide Design Guidelines of highest priority for this project.

The Neighborhood specific guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

**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-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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

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

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- Enhance public safety throughout the neighborhood to foster 18-hour public activity. Methods to consider are: enhanced pedestrian and street lighting; well- designed public spaces that are defensively designed with clear sight lines and opportunities for eyes on the street; police horse tie-up locations for routine patrols and larger event assistance.

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

**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.

**E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions.** 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.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

Landscaping should be designed to take advantage of views to waterfront and downtown Seattle.

## 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.

The applicant has requested departures from the SM-65 zoning development standards that were in effect at the time of EDG application, prior to the Land Use Code changes that became effective May 13, 2013.

**In the next Recommendation packet that is sent to the Board, the applicant should provide a clear description of all proposed departures, specific dimensions requested with each departure, and diagrams demonstrating the area of departure in comparison to the Code requirement.**

At the time of the Initial Recommendation meeting, the following departures were requested:

- 1. Street Level Setbacks (SMC 23.48.014.D):** The Code requires a maximum of 30% of the façade to be set back a maximum of 12' from the property line. The applicant proposes to set back 69% of the façade more than 12' back from the south property line, in order to provide a plaza adjacent to Mercer Street.

The Board indicated they would continue to entertain this departure at the Final Recommendation meeting, and offered preliminary support for the proposed departure.

- 2. Street Level Uses (SMC 23.48.019.B):** The Code requires certain street-level uses for 75% of the street frontage on Class 1 Streets (Westlake Ave N). The applicant proposes to provide 62% of the Westlake street frontage as required uses. The proposed uses along Westlake Ave N. include retail in the Pacific McKay and Ford McKay street frontages, research building entry, and auditorium lobby.

The Board indicated they would continue to entertain this departure at the next Recommendation meeting, provided the design of the northeast plaza includes additional street furniture (benches, etc.), additional landscaping, and the in-pavement lighting is built

as shown on pages 18-19 of the Initial Recommendation packet. (A-2, A-4, B-1, D-1, E-1, E-2, E-3)

- 3. Transparency and Blank Façade Requirements (SMC 23.48.018.B.3.a):** The Code requires a minimum of 30% of the street-level facades to be transparent, with blank facades no more than 30' wide. The applicant proposes a 102'5" long blank wall on 9th Ave N and a 141'5" long blank wall on Broad Street. Most of the 9th Ave N. blank façade would include a media wall. Most of the Broad Street blank façade would include a media wall or garage entries.

The Board indicated they would continue to entertain this departure at the next Recommendation meeting, provided the design responds to the Initial Recommendations in this report. (A-2, B-1, C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4, D-1, D-2, D-11)

- 4. Curb Cuts (SMC 23.54.030.F):** The Code allows one 2-way curb cut, or two 1-way curb cuts. Curb cuts for commercial uses are required to be between 22' and 25' wide. The applicant proposes 3 curb cuts to allow one curb cut for service vehicles. The third curb cut would be 20' wide.

The Board indicated they would continue to entertain this departure at the Final Recommendation meeting, and offered preliminary support for the proposed departure, based on the proposed design showing interesting treatment of the garage entry walls, a pedestrian place of refuge between curb cuts, and the proposed landscaping plan.

- 5. Minimum Façade Height (SMC 23.48.014.B):** The Code requires a minimum façade height of 45' on Class 1 Pedestrian Streets (Westlake Ave N). The applicant proposes to locate the Pacific McKay and Ford McKay historic landmark facades (23'8" to 33'11" tall) at the Westlake Ave N. and Mercer Street frontages. The new structure would be set back from the historic landmarks.

The Board indicated they would continue to entertain this departure at the Final Recommendation meeting, and offered preliminary support for the proposed departure.

- 6. Façade Setbacks (SMC 23.48.014.C):** The Code requires that 70% of facades on Class 1 Pedestrian Streets (Westlake Ave N) are built to the street property line. The applicant proposes to locate 62% of the Westlake Ave N façade at the street property line. The remaining 38% of the façade would be set back in response to the curved northeast property corner and provide wider sidewalk/plaza area at the northeast corner.

The Board indicated they would continue to entertain this departure at the next Recommendation meeting, provided the design of the northeast plaza includes additional street furniture (benches, etc.), additional landscaping, and the in-pavement lighting is built as shown on pages 18-19 of the Initial Recommendation packet. (A-2, A-4, B-1, D-1, E-1, E-2, E-3)

## **BOARD DIRECTION**

**At the conclusion of the Initial Recommendation meeting, the Board recommended the project should return for a second Recommendation meeting to address the Initial Recommendations in this report.**