



# City of Seattle

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



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3014773

Address: 204 Pine Street

Applicant: Jim Westcott, of Weber Thompson Architects, for GBD Architects & Equity Residential

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, May 07, 2013

Board Members Present: Gabe Grant (Chair)  
Mathew Albores  
Murphy McCullough  
Pragnesh Parikh

Board Members Absent: Gundula Proksch

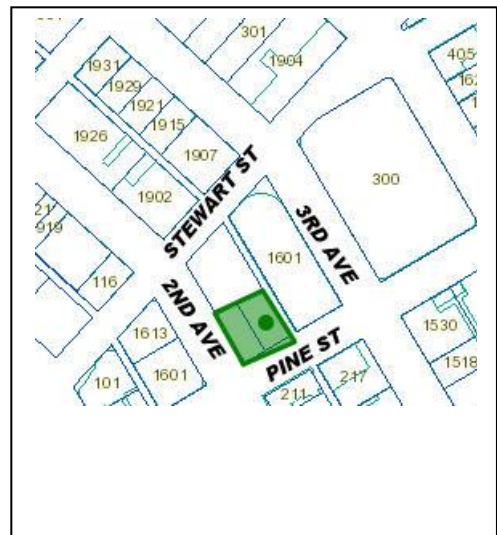
DPD Staff Present: Garry Papers, Senior Land Use Planner

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: DMC 240/290-400

Nearby Zones: (North) DMC 240/290-400  
(South) DMC 240/290-400  
(East) DRC 85/150  
(West) DMC 240/290-400

Lot Area: 14,159 sf rectangle; gentle slope down 7 ft from northwest to southeast



Current Development: Surface parking lot

Access: Corner lot fronting south onto Pine Street, and west onto 2nd Avenue. Alley access from east.

Surrounding Development: The site is west of the half-block, 9 level parking structure known as the 'Macy's garage', separated by the alley. The rest of the subject half-block is currently a surface parking lot. A mix of 4 -14 story commercial buildings occupy the surrounding street faces, with consistent, active ground floor uses, usually retail.

ECAs: None

Neighborhood Character: This strategic corner site is in the heart of a dynamic mixed use, downtown district, serving residents, workers, shoppers and tourists. The 2 adjacent streets are very active pedestrian corridors connecting to the waterfront and Pike Place Market; both are classified Class 1 Pedestrian Streets and Principal Transit Streets. The vicinity contains a high percentage of high quality, 20th century commercial buildings (several are landmarks), exhibiting different styles but generating a harmony of consistently transparent street levels, rich articulation, and generally lighter color materials.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant is proposing a 400 ft, 39 story residential tower of approximately 375 units and 364,000 sq ft, including amenity space, and approximately 3,000 sf of ground level retail. Four levels of parking above the ground floor and 4 below grade (about 300 spaces) are proposed, with 2 access ramps off the alley, adjacent to the required loading.

**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: May 7, 2013**

## DESIGN 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](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](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 15 members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Noted the sculptural character of the option A tower, especially to the south, was more interesting on the skyline than the “very flat walls” of options B & C.
- Stated the retail proposed is only about 20% of the ground floor, and that is not enough considering the corner is a “virtual 100% intersection” and could garner high rents.
- Objected to the largely blank, north party wall on the podium, even though it may be covered by an adjacent building in the future.
- Encouraged the addition of residents in the vicinity to balance the commercial and tourist population.
- Stated the option C proposed top was interesting, but was concerned the middle floors were lacking interest and too repetitive for such a highly prominent site.
- Concerned about wind shear down the face of flat tower walls, thus supported the large canopy at the podium of option A; would like to see an analysis of wind impacts to sidewalks.

## 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 following Downtown Design Guidelines of **highest priority for this project**.

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

### 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.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed this is an exceptional corner site, highly visible, with an extremely active pedestrian street character. It fills a crucial missing tooth in the fabric and connects the inland commercial core to Pike Place Market and the waterfront. Therefore the project should strongly reinforce this vital**

pedestrian movement, and be well-informed by the uses, rhythm and patterns in the surrounding context, especially at the podium and street level [see B-1 below].

The Board agreed the response to the 2nd Avenue street axis and grid shift is promising, as it breaks the relatively long tower wall planes into smaller facets (also see departure request). They also encouraged more exploration of a vertical inter-lock between podium and tower, perhaps enlarging the proposed vertical slots, and/or carrying one of three tower corners right to sidewalk grade, as shown in option A. Other sculptural aspects of option A or B may be integrated into C, to increase variety in the middle zone of floors 10-34.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed the proposed tower would be visible essentially from all sides, from all distances, from the water and surrounding hills. Therefore the tower composition and especially the tower top are critical design elements. The Board agreed the step backs, angled top profile, large balconies and the large amenity canopy of option C were the most promising for creating a handsome transition to the sky. Based on the views down 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, the northwest corner of the top deserves more compositional effort, equal to the currently emphasized southwest corner view.

## **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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board emphasized how the lower levels and ground floor must continue the positive pedestrian experience and predominantly retail uses along both street fronts. The relevant urban analysis (pg 17-19) was sound, however the Board did not see how it informed the retail frontage shown in option C; which had the following weaknesses:

- a)The height of glazing/transparency appears overwhelmed by the mass wall above; the glazed retail height should increase and less mass should bear down on it;
- b)The renderings show about 23 ft of mass wall along the Pine sidewalk, this is too long a blank wall (and is not consistent with the departure portrayal on pg 69);
- c)Although horizontal glazing slots are present in the podium parking floors, they are narrow and the percentage of mass to glazing is very high; redesign to add more

glazing. And consider more material variation, layering and perhaps a third translucent material that helps reduce the mass wall bulk (the Board was certain that parked cars should not be visible from the street, but is receptive to bikes, storage and other semi-active 'shadows' being visible to pedestrians).

- 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.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed how the surrounding buildings display a consistent street level experience, largely transparent, diverse active uses, and richly layered materiality. The proposed storefronts and podium should be informed by a fulsome analysis of these attributes and the intelligent transfer of essential principles to the proposed ground floor.**

- 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.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed how this prominent site deserves a very integrated and high quality design, especially at the podium and tower top. The Board mildly supported the applicant-preferred option C, but they stressed more interlock of the podium to tower and major revisions to the podium itself. They welcomed the positive attributes of Options A & B to be integrated into C, including more sculptural treatments to the middle floors.**

## **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.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board extensively discussed the relatively small amount of ground floor retail, the minimal retail frontage on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, and the absence of a retail door on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.**

The Board was in unanimous agreement that the retail use should wrap the corner more than shown, to at least the line of the elevator core doorway, and ideally being 50 -75% of the 2<sup>nd</sup> avenue frontage. They also required provision for a retail door on 2<sup>nd</sup>, and encouraged the storefronts on Pine to contain multiple door-sets and be demisable into 2-3 spaces. They applauded the 16-20 ft clear retail heights and stated the proposed 31-37 ft depth to be minimally acceptable.

The Board agreed the residential lobby should shift further north on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, that the lounge function along the street should be reduced or internalized, but that the leasing office/sales office provides 9-5 active use behind large transparent windows, and the amount could remain as shown on pg 69.

- 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.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board applauded the light, crystalline character of the tower renderings shown (pg 44-46). They supported the activity and scale contribution that the 4 levels of micro-units provided at the strategic corner; these should remain as shown, regardless of other podium changes, as these provide middle scale compositional interest and help to de-emphasize the parking floors. The Board encouraged more interlocking of the podium and lower tower**

- C-3 Provide Active—Not Blank—Facades.** Buildings should not have large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed this highly pedestrian location warrants almost no blank façades, certainly along Pine and 2<sup>nd</sup> (see B-1 for concern about the blank wall shown at south east corner). They agreed even the north podium party wall should display less monolithic mass and/or more material variation.**

- C-4 Reinforce Building Entries.** To promote pedestrian comfort, safety, and orientation, reinforce the building's entry.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board supported the recessed residential entrance and its reinforcement with a strong fin element visible up through the podium; but that entrance location should shift north, even if stepped floors result.**

- 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.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed generous protection is essential on all frontages of this highly pedestrian location. They noted extensive canopies were shown on the detailed podium studies, and they should be retained and provide continuous protection.**

- 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.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed how pedestrian active the vicinity is and that all alleys are also pedestrian; they encouraged the alley façade to be developed similar to a street facing one, especially for the visible south half, employing quality materials, details and lighting, yet not creating CPTED issues. They encouraged the southeast corner be eased back and/or transparent to promote sight angle visibility and pedestrian/vehicle safety.**

<b>D. Public Amenities</b>
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***Enhancing the Streetscape & Open Space***

- 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.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board reiterated that the key attributes of this location are the highly visible building corner and pedestrian concentration/linkages to nearby destinations. Thus the architectural composition, materiality, pedestrian interest, and transparency of the street level should be very well resolved, acknowledging the richly layered and human scaled elements in most all of the surrounding street levels. The entry reveals and slots provide a place-making opportunity for material variation and other identifying treatments inside the property line.**

- 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.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed that commercial and building signage – especially the residential lobby - should be well integrated and detailed in the Recommendation submittal.**

- 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.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed the lighting strategy should be well developed for Recommendation, including abundant light level for safety along the alley and a rich scheme along the street sides. They also encouraged a distinctive but not garish lighting strategy for the tower shaft and top, as the profile will be visible from all sides, and residents will not want light intrusion. Consider a glow of light off the proposed fins on each side and the amenity canopy, rather than garish or self-important lighting accents.**

- 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.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed the alley and even north party wall should have ample lighting to improve safety and minimize vagrancy. Also see C-6 for comments on safety at the southeast corner next to the alley.**

## **E. Vehicular Access & Parking**

### ***Minimizing the Adverse Impacts***

- 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.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed how the above grade parking podium is handled on this strategic, highly visible corner, is in many ways the key to the project. They spent considerable time discussing the podium, its screening treatment and retail storefronts. See comments under A-1, B-1 and B-4 above.**

## **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based upon the departure's potential to 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. **Street Level Use (SMC 23.49.009.B.3):** In brief, the Code requires street level on this corner for 75% of each property frontage to be of certain designated active uses. The applicant proposes 75-80% of qualifying uses along Pine Street (Complies) but only 32.5 % of qualifying uses along the 2nd Avenue frontage.

**The Board indicated no support for the departure as presented, as it did not wrap the retail far enough around the strategic corner and north along 2nd Avenue.**

2. **Maximum Tower Width (SMC 23.49.058.D.2):** In brief, the Code requires the maximum north-south length of a facade above 85 ft to be 80% of the lot length, meaning 105 ft in this instance. The applicant proposes a maximum length of 116 ft, which is +10.5% or 11 feet more. Also, they propose 1094 sf in the 15 ft setback zone, where the code limits that to 983 sf maximum.

**The Board indicated reluctance to comment on this departure request, in the absence of a serious "code compliant Option" (the applicant simply showed the 105 ft dimension and a pure box that did not correspond to any of the 3 options). The applicant should develop a viable, comparable code compliant Option for consideration at the Recommendation meeting.**

3. **Common Recreation Area (SMC 23.49.010.B.1):** In brief, the Code requires 5% of the total residential GSF to be common amenity/recreation area (in this case 10,667 sf) and for 50% maximum of that sf to be enclosed. The applicant proposes 9,705 sf of recreation space (962 sf or 9% less than required), and about 76% of it enclosed (26% beyond code).

**The Board indicated unanimous support for this departure at this conceptual stage, as long as the common exterior space stays distributed on levels 6 and 40, and with a sizable amount at level 40 and oriented to the west.**

4. **Podium Parking Screening (SMC 23.49.019.2):** In brief, the Code requires any parking above the third story to be 'wrapped' by another use for 30% minimum of its street frontage, and if a corner site, those other uses must occupy the corner. The applicant proposes all 4 levels of above grade parking, levels 2-5, to have another use, at the corner, resulting in a total of 3,400 sf of activated façade, compared to the 2,008 minimum total required, if only done at third and fourth levels.

**The Board expressed unanimous support for this departure as presented.**

## 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.**

The DRB also required the following explicit direction of issues to be addressed in the Recommendation submittal:

- 1) **B-1: Provide a ground floor/lower level context analysis** of the surrounding vicinity and show the proposed ground- floor 6 facades inserted into the existing elevations photo-survey, to scale. The extent should be: east-west from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> (both sides), and north-south from Josephinum to 1521 2<sup>nd</sup> (both sides). Also include updated perspectives similar to those on pg 49/50 in the EDG booklet.
- 2) **C-1: Provide a design with code compliant retail frontage along 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue**, or at least wrapping the corner to create about 50% retail frontage on 2<sup>nd</sup>, or detailed evidence why more retail wrap is not possible.
- 3) **E-2: Provide Podium elevation and perspective study options** (and detailed sections), addressing the following: more transparent and/or material variation in floors 2-5; taller retail and/or 2<sup>nd</sup> level reading to street; material layering and depth of all podium levels.
- 4) **B-3: Develop a viable, comparable code-compliant tower option** (specifically the 105 ft maximum north-south façade length) for consideration at the Recommendation meeting.
- 5) **B-2: Show a basic 125 ft massing envelope** for the north portion of the half-block, and on all drawings and the physical model.
- 6) **B-4: Revise the physical model** to show a preferred scheme option and the above code-compliant tower massing option.
- 7) **B-1: Show the tower under construction** at 1911 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, in the physical model and all future views.