



FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3014948

Address: 1124 Columbia Street

Applicant: Joe Workman with Collins Woerman

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, October 23, 2013

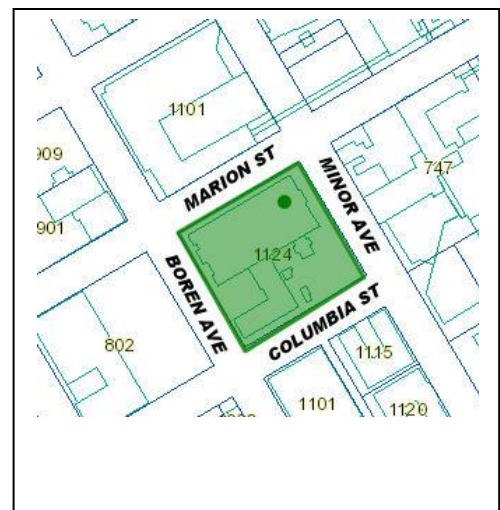
Board Members Present: Mike Austin
Dawn Bushnaq
Ric Cochrane
Natalie Gualy
Christina Orr-Cahall

Board Members Absent: Dan Foltz

DPD Staff Present: Bruce P. Rips

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial Three with a 160 foot height limit (NC3 160). The site includes a Major Institutional Overlay (MIO 160) with the same height limit.



Zoning Patterns:	<p>The underlying NC3 160 zone extends along the Madison St. corridor from I-5 on the west to Harvard St. on the east. Multifamily Highrise (HR) zone represents the dominant zoning classification to the west and south of the subject site. A combination of HR and multifamily Midrise zoning is the primary zoning to the east. A MIO designation for the vicinity of the Swedish Medical complex, Seattle University and the Virginia Mason Medical complex covers much of the area to the site's north and east.</p>
Lot Area:	<p>The full block site comprises 61,440 square feet. The site rises from Boren Ave toward the center of the block by an estimated 16 feet where it flattens out.</p>
Current Development:	<p>Three structures currently occupy the full block. A seven-story structure, built in 1974, forms a rectangular mass along Marion St that occupies the site's northern half. Within the structure, a loading dock and a limited amount of parking is accessed from Marion St. The second structure, Eklind Hall, rises five-stories and occupies the block's southwest corner. Originally built in 1945 as a nursing facility it houses lab spaces. The proponent seeks to demolish this structure. Beneath the parking lot on the remaining corner, lies a three-story "Vivarium". This too would be demolished.</p>
Access:	<p>Existing vehicular access occurs on Minor Ave., Marion Street, and Columbia St.</p>

Surrounding
Development
&
Neighborhood
Character:

The broader neighborhood possesses a plethora of land uses. These include major medical services, cultural and educational institutions, mixed use, office and retail. Along the immediate northern, eastern and southern edges of the site, building uses generally comprise a mix of institutional and medical services along with periphery parking garages. The site is also within the MIO that governs Swedish Medical Campus. The area has an urban character dominated by institutions. The western edge of the property borders Boren Ave, a primary arterial. The urban character west of Boren Ave. is quieter and pedestrian oriented. The architectural scale is smaller, less dense, and has gracious sidewalks and large street trees. At the intersection of Boren Ave. and Madison St. sit a cluster of mixed use, residential and retail uses. The buildings have extensive amounts of transparency and overhead weather protection.

Numerous significant buildings populate the area: Swedish Medical Center, O’Dea High School, St. James Cathedral, Frye Art Museum, Cabrini Center, and the Sorrento Hotel.

ECAs: The site does not have a mapped Environmental Critical Area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes a seven-story medical office building with below grade parking for 410 vehicles as an addition to an existing structure.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The applicant presented three massing alternatives. Scheme A replaces Eklind Hall with a six story medical office structure linked to the existing seven-story building by a vertical circulation core. The new structure anchors the block’s southwest corner. Where the surface parking lot covers the top of the vivarium today, the applicant inserts a five level, below grade parking garage. Along Boren Ave, a bike storage/locker room fronts the street. Access to the parking garage occurs on Columbia St. with a patient drop-off area in roughly the same place off Minor St. as exists currently. Scheme B forms a rectangular block or mass on the southern portion of the site parallel to the existing seven-story structure. The structure rises eight levels above Boren Ave. with three floors of parking and three floors of medical office. Similar to Scheme A, Columbia St. serves as access to a parking garage. Due to the lower ceiling heights of the garage, the proposed structure does not have the same height as the existing building. Skywalks link the two structures.

Sharing similarities to the first alternative, Scheme C forms a cubic mass at the southwest corner on the site of Eklind Hall connected to the larger building with enclosed circulation. A five level,

above grade parking garage sits on the southeast corner roughly where the vivarium and surface parking lot are. Similar to the other schemes, Columbia St. provides access to the garage.

By the Recommendation meeting the applicant had refined scheme A and developed an auto-turnaround with a generous entry plaza.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one in attendance affixed his or her name to the sign-in sheet. No one commented on 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. The Board identified the Citywide Design Guidelines & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

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

A. Site Planning

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

The design of the vehicle turnaround and building entry plaza met the expectation of a well designed landscape in a garden-like setting.

Considerable deliberation focused on the parking garage walls along Columbia St. and Boren Ave. The extent of these blank walls does not comply with the city's land use code. Appreciating the architect's studies for the Columbia St. wall, the Board recommended that the detail and craft of the wall continue along Boren underneath the projecting window bay. The design for the walls will need to be reviewed and approved by the staff urban planner.

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

The Board recommended a revision of the Boren St. entrance to provide greater visibility and architectural presence. Consider using signage, railing design, detailing in concert with the revisions to the lower portion of the wall and a more robust canopy to produce a more inviting entry. See guidance for D-7.

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

The Board discussed the insertion of a set of exterior steps connecting the entry plaza to Columbia St. and encouraged the applicant to explore this idea.

- A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access. Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties, and pedestrian safety.**

The applicant complied with the earlier guidance to reduce the number of curb cuts from two to one. The entry plaza has generous plantings and sitting areas creating a balance between the desires to accommodate patient drop-off and to establish a garden setting in harmony with First Hill neighborhoods.

- A-9 Location of Parking on Commercial Street Fronts. Parking on a commercial street front should be minimized and where possible should be located behind a building.**

The applicant illustrated a four foot wide planter with an artistically designed wall facing Columbia St. to screen the parking area. The Board encouraged a variety of planting types with some cascading over the wall.

- 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.**

The landscape treatment of the plaza entry and auto court received an enthusiastic response. The applicant reduced the number of curb cuts for the vehicles and provided plantings along the edges and at the center of the court.

B. Height, Bulk and Scale

- 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.**

The structure's massing received tacit support.

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.**

The composition of the proposed building mass, with its materials, colors and details, forms a sympathetic or complementary companion to both the larger adjacent structure and to the neighborhood of surrounding institutional buildings. A substantial, curved reveal facing Boren visually separates the new structure from the old and allows the

transition between a concrete dominant façade to one mostly comprised of glazing. At the upper four levels of the proposed structure, curves and angled walls soften its cubic massing and establish a three story plinth below. A one-story volume, housing ancillary offices and a bike storage room, projects toward Boren producing greater intimacy of scale. A condition to revise the blank wall below the fenestration will enhance the scale at the pedestrian level. The detailing of spandrels and fenestration forms datum lines complementary to the older structure.

- 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.**

In response to earlier guidance, the design of the entry canopy and the angled upper walls of the east elevation give definition to the entry court. These elements mirror the vehicular movements necessary for the auto court and serve as a stage set for the landscaped plaza.

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

The building design, particularly at the lower floors, with its prominent mullions and piers establishes an intimate scale that visually reduces the overall building mass. The blank walls forming the parking garage along Boren and Columbia streets counters this impulse; however, the architect's design studies of the Columbia St. wall (pp. 24-25 of the Recommendation booklet) would produce a distinctive façade that potentially evokes a sense of place or identity. The Board recommended continuing the design concept of the Columbia wall to the lower, opaque portions of the Boren elevation.

D. Pedestrian Environment

- 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.**

The auto court configuration as both a garden and a patient entry plaza met the Board's expectations. The near park-like setting generated enthusiasm with its mix of plantings and seating areas.

- 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.**

Board guidance in A-2, A-9, C-2 and D-5 addresses the need for further development of the blank walls along Columbia St. and Boren Ave. Preliminary studies by the architect illustrate the design team's intention to produce an artistic solution.

- D-4 Design of Parking Lots Near Sidewalks. Parking lots near sidewalks should provide adequate security and lighting, avoid encroachment of vehicles onto the sidewalk, and minimize the visual clutter of parking lot signs and equipment.**

See discussion of lighting in the entry plaza D-10 and E-2.

- D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures. The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape. Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.**

Portions of the parking garage reveal itself above grade along Boren and Columbia. The Board recommended that the architect keep in mind while designing the wall to bring the inserts to the ground, use multiple materials, and ensure that the wall has lighting. The architects may want to imbue the inserts with a narrative to ensure a sense of identity.

- 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.**

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

From a safety perspective, the Board considered the Boren St. entrance in need of greater visibility. Its back door appearance should be revised both from a security perspective for those who will enter the building from Boren and visually to signify its greater importance to the west façade.

- 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.**

The Board noted its concern for the amount of lighting and the viability of fixtures in the inserts along the Columbia St. wall.

The Board members also conveyed their desire that the plaza have an adequate amount of lighting but that it doesn't spillover or contribute to lighting the night sky.

- 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. Landscaping

- 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.**

The garden-like character of the plaza will contribute to the pedestrian quality of First Hill.

- 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.**

The applicant's design of the auto court met the aspirations described in the early design guidance. It balances the needs of the patients for a drop-off area and the larger community for a park-like setting. The Board recommended that the trees in the plaza be up-lighted.

Recommendations: The recommendations summarized below were based on the plans and models submitted at the October 23, 2013 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 October 23, 2013 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) Continue the detail and craft of the Columbia St wall between the sidewalk and the parking to the portion of the Boren wall underneath the projecting window bay. The designers should keep in mind while designing the wall to bring the inserts to the ground, use multiple materials, and ensure that the wall has lighting. The design for the Columbia and Boren walls will need to be reviewed and approved by the staff urban planner. (A-2,C-1,C-3,D-2,D-5)
- 2) Revise the Boren St. entrance to provide greater visibility and presence. Consider using signage, railing design, a more robust canopy, and detailing in concert with the revisions to the lower portion of the wall to produce a more inviting entry. (A-3,D-7)
- 3) Up-light the trees in the entry plaza. (E-2)

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation 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. Blank Façade Spacing SMC 23.47A.008A.2.b	Blank segments of the street facing façade between 2 and 8' above the sidewalk may not exceed 20' in width.	Request maximum blank façade segment of 96'-10" on Columbia St.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The wall separating the vehicle turnaround and parking area from Columbia St is highly articulated with elements of visual interest. A-2,9,C-3,D-5 	Recommended Approval
2. Blank Façade Spacing SMC 23.47A.008A.2.b	Blank segments of the street facing façade between 2 and 8' above the sidewalk may not exceed 20' in width.	Request maximum blank façade segment of 92' on Boren Ave.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board based its recommended approval on condition #1 to add significant articulation to the Boren Ave wall similar to the Columbia St. wall. A-2,9,C-3,D-5 	Recommended Approval
3. Blank Façade. SMC 23.47A.008A.2.c	The total of all blank façade segments may not exceed 40% of the width of the façade of the structure along the street.	Request total blank façade of 51% on Columbia St.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 4' wide planter and its vegetation will add visual interest. The street side of the planter will be highly articulated with an original design. A-2,9,C-3,D-5 	Recommended Approval
4. Blank Façade. SMC 23.47A.008A.2.c	The total of all blank façade segments may not exceed 40% of the width of the façade of the structure along the street.	Request total blank façade of 85% on Columbia St.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 10' wide planting bed separates the blank wall and the street. The Board based its recommended approval on condition #1 to add significant articulation to the Boren Ave wall similar to the Columbia St. wall. A-2,9,C-3,D-5 	Recommended Approval
5. Transparency SMC 23.47A.008B.2.a	60% of the street facing façade between 2 and 8' above the sidewalk shall be transparent.	Request transparency of 24% on Columbia St.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 4' wide planter and its vegetation will add visual interest. The street side of the planter will be highly articulated with an original design. A-2,9,C-3,D-5 	Recommended Approval

STANDARD	REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	JUSTIFICATION	RECOMMENDATION
6. Transparency SMC 23.47A.008B.2.a	60% of the street facing façade between 2 and 8' above the sidewalk shall be transparent.	Request transparency of 32% on Boren Ave.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A 10' wide planting bed separates the blank wall and the street. ▪ The Board based its recommended approval on condition #1 to add significant articulation to the Boren Ave wall similar to the Columbia St. wall. A-2,9,C-3,D-5 	Recommended Approval
7. Parking Location SMC 23.47A.032. B.1.a	Parking shall not be located between a structure and a street lot line.	Request that short-term parking be allowed between existing structure and Columbia St. lot line.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A 4' wide planter and its vegetation will add visual interest. ▪ The street side of the planter will be highly articulated with an original design. A-2,9,C-3,D-5 	Recommended Approval
8. Parking Separation SMC 23.47A.032B.1.b	Within a structure, street level parking shall be separated from street level, street facing facades by another permitted use.	Request garage parking along Columbia St. be allowed without an intervening use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The vehicle turn-around and building entrance have generous landscaping and sitting areas. E-1, E-2 	Recommended Approval
9. Height SMC 23.47A.008B.3.b	Non-residential uses at street level shall have a floor to floor height of at least 13'.	Request the floor to floor height of non-residential use at street level to be 11'6"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The floors of the new addition align with the adjacent connecting building. C-1 	Recommended Approval
10. Depth SMC 23.47A.008B.3	Non-residential uses shall extend an average depth of at least 30' and a minimum of 15' from the street level, street facing façade.	Request average depth of non-residential use along Boren Ave to be 20'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The shorter depth allows a more functional garage and a wider landscape area along Boren Ave. A-2 	Recommended Approval
11. Setbacks SMC 23.47A.008A.3	Street level, street facing facades shall be located within 10' of the street lot line unless wider sidewalks, plazas or other approved landscaped Open spaces are provided.	Request that east façade be set back off the Minor Ave 139'6".	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The addition sits approximately in the same location as the structure to be demolished. ▪ The entry court for pedestrians and vehicles resembles a plaza. E-1, E-2 	Recommended Approval