



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE #2 OF THE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3015251

Address: 600 Wall Street (at 6th and Denny Way)

Applicant: Denis Henmi, of Kwan Henmi Architecture, for Laconia LLC

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, January 07, 2014

Board Members Present: Gabe Grant (Chair)
Mathew Albores
Murphy McCullough
Gundula Proksch

Board Members Absent: Pragnesh Parikh

DPD Staff Present: Garry Papers, Senior Land Use Planner

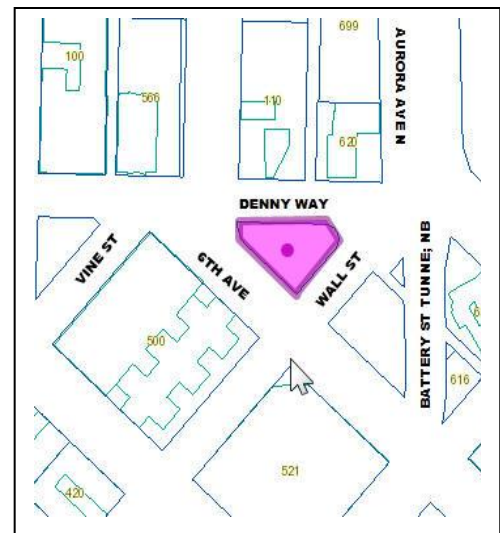
SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: DMC 240/290-400

Nearby Zones: (North) SM-85
(South) DMC 240/290-400
(East) DMC 240/290-400
(West) DMR/R-125/65

Lot Area: 10,655 sf triangle; flat

Current Development: Surface parking lot



Access:	Triangular lot fronting north onto Denny Way, southwest onto 6th Avenue, and southeast onto Wall Street. No alley on site; SDOT has prohibited vehicular access off Denny. Pedestrian access from all three sides.
Surrounding Development:	The site is bordered by an 18 story residential tower across 6th avenue to the southwest, a 3 story office/educational block to the south, and a newer 8 story hotel across Denny Way to the north. The adjacent site to the southeast and others beyond are surface parking lots, but these are transforming, including the twin 41 story Insignia condo towers under construction one block south.
ECAs:	None
Neighborhood Character:	This highly visible site is surrounded by the mixed use districts of Belltown, Uptown and South Lake Union, serving residents, workers, and tourists. The Seattle Center and iconic Space Needle are about a quarter mile northwest of the site. All three adjacent streets are classified Class 2 Pedestrian Streets and Principal arterials; Denny Way is especially busy with vehicles. The vicinity contains a mix of commercial and residential structures of various styles and eras, but they generate a consistently pedestrian friendly public realm, especially to the south and west.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant is proposing a 400 ft, 39 story residential tower of approximately 310 units in the top 33 levels, including amenity space and a large ground floor lobby, and approximately 1,800 sf of ground level retail. Five levels of automated parking above the ground floor and 5 below grade (total about 284 spaces) are proposed, with 2 access ramps; one down from 6th and one up from the P1 level to Wall St.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: November 5, 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.
or contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

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

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 5 members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Cautioned that the above grade parking has translucent glass screening and lighting that could distract drivers or be too garish; (applicants clarified it will be subtle lighting changes to mimic the coming-and-going of residents in typical units).
- Stated the existing Denny sidewalk is too narrow, and encouraged more walkable surface width, especially if adjacent uses are commercial and could spill out onto the sidewalk.
- Suggested the 400 ft height is too tall for the context.
- Encouraged the addition of balconies and other scale and relief on the facades, which currently look 'office-like'.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING #2: January 7, 2014

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.

or contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

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

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments at this meeting.

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 (the Board) provided the following siting and design guidance. The Board identified the following Downtown Design Guidelines of **highest priority for this project**.

The Priority Downtown guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. 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 #1, the Board discussed how this strategic site, while small and constrained, offers exceptional visibility and prominence in the city, and thus deserves a persuasive design concept that responds to that unusual site and its context. The Board requested more understanding of how the context and street level patterns inform the lower levels and tower massing, beyond a pure extrusion. The acute corners will be very prominent at proximate and distant viewpoints, so they require special analysis, and may be different expressions based on the specific conditions of this 'pivot' between grids. Also see comments under B-2 about the podium scale.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting #2, the Board discussed three components of this guideline: ground floor uses, podium expression, and upper tower expression. The ground floor sidewalks and uses are much improved from EDG #1, but further improvements are described under C-1 and D-3. The Board supported the two acute Denny corner expressions as shown (page 49/51), with refinements to the podium composition and materials described under B-2, and upper tower refinements described under A-2 and B-4.

[The Board requests all perspectives portray accurate context, in particular the outdated massing across Denny Way shown on pg. 42/43.]

- 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 #1, the Board discussed how the building, especially the top, would be visible from many locations and distances, including the sizable traffic flowing east and west on Denny Way, north-south on Auroura, and the Mercer Street offramp. To fully test the tower top and profile on the skyline, future meetings should include multiple perspective simulations from key locations.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting #2, the Board appreciated the multiple perspectives provided, and used them to inform the comments under B-2 and B-4. The Board found the tower top composition shown on page 52 promising, especially the spatial interest in the amenity rooms and the generous amount of exterior deck

available to the public. However the Board noted the tower top is possibly too busy in material and formal moves, and needs clarification.

The Board requested a floor 40 plan (even if mechanical), plus explanatory diagrams, proposed materials and a design rationale for the following elements:

- the three blue fins, which stop at different levels and appear to track through to the sidewalk;
- the semi-circular metal panel wall at floor 39;
- the metal panel curved wall facing Denny, and why it is canted and so similar to the one referenced above?

Based on the page 40-43 perspectives, the tower top provides visual interest, but the Board requests more information to evaluate proportions, materials and composition.

B. Architectural Expression

Relating to the Neighborhood Context

B-2 Create a Transition in Bulk & Scale. Compose the massing of the building to create a transition to the height, bulk, and scale of development in neighboring or nearby less intensive zones.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting #1, the Board commented that the immediate context is diverse, but exhibits an important ‘urban’ podium datum of 5-7 stories, which is currently not expressed in the proposal. This height also corresponds with the proposed parking/studios above grade, which should be expressed more authentically, especially the two-story studios at the corners. To confirm the relationships of uses to facades, future meetings should include large scale cross sections of the first 7 floors at several locations, including the streetscape to curb, and corresponding façade treatments side-by-side.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting #2, the Board discussed how the proposal now includes a desirable podium scale, but that it appears grafted onto the tower or is too heavily expressed, especially at the 6th & Wall corner. The Board advised the following:

- Express the level 2-6 zone as a distinct corner form, but explore a ‘more honest’ material expression of the uses within. The red wall surfaces are too large and distracting.
- Explore channel glass or a similarly solid translucent treatment to clad the parking levels, with the floor slabs internalized and showcasing the vehicle lifts with transparent glass. Seeing shadows of the stored cars and frames is acceptable.

- Express the entire 24 ft high space of the amenity along Denny, rather than the partial red box; it should be distinct from the revised 6th/Wall corner treatment, and still accentuate the acute corners as different uses and different composition.
- Explore actual rental units, stacked in the 2 acute corners, rather than amenity/studio spaces; units provide consistent and real activation, especially if balconies are included. (Also see comments under Departure #2)

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 the parking program and functions of the lower tower at length. While supportive of the efficiencies of the proposed robotic parking, the Board agreed any above grade parking is undesirable, since it replaces truly active facades and human uses. To fully understand the constraints, the Board requested the following explanations at future meetings: sections to better understand why that system is not used deeper than B6 on the south and east robotic banks, opposite the tunnel constraint; why the storage lockers and mechanical on levels 2-6 cannot be replaced with more activating studios; ramps and precise car movements on B1, and convenient provision of bikes and car-share to reduce/minimize the high parking ratio in this dense urban location.

The Board also discussed the facades of the parking/studio floors at length, and was concerned they display a confusing design logic. The Board agreed the 2 story studios add an important double scale, and should be expressed as 2 stories, while the parking portions between (if retained) should not be disguised like glass residential units. The large framing elements above these floors create scale, but they should not simply die into the ground, and maybe they should be different on 1 or 2 sides of the triangle. There was particular concern about the 160 ft width and absence of deep modulation along the Denny wall (see departure #1 comments).

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting #2, the Board understood the below-grade excavation constraints and agreed the podium uses are much improved, in particular the amenity spaces on Denny. The Board supports the car share spaces on P-1. They discussed how the podium issues described in B-2 must transition well into the middle of the tower. To better evaluate this, the Board requires:

- Full page elevations with complete color and material notes.
- Large scale sections of the first 7-8 floors, showing dimensions and all façade elements (the ones shown on pages 36/37 are too small; ¼ inch scale preferred).

NOTE: these should be composited with the landscape-only sections shown on pages 32-34.

- Large scale partial elevations (floors 7-8) adjacent to corresponding sections, which show all materials and light tone shadows, but not street trees.

The Board agreed the four white frames on the mid-tower provide middle scale to the three elevations, but they appear to be thin planes; show more details that establish the materiality and depth of these elements (as suggested by the white wall returns on pages 45,47 and 49), and show these accurately on floor plans. Also, explore the following as part of the elevation refinements:

- Explore a 2-3 floor transition between the podium and middle tower, starting the white frames at floorline 9 or 10 rather than 8.
- Explore the white frames along Denny starting above the podium, and not overlapping with the podium amenity expression, as currently shown on page 51.
- Explore reducing the width of the white frame elements, and/or their identical material/color nature on all three street frontages.
- To test these relationships, provide perspective studies like on pages 45,47,49, but that extend further upward into the tower.

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 #1, the Board supported the corner bulb-outs and expanded streetscape proposed, but was concerned the ground level uses and design treatment do not support that positive streetscape, in particular at the enlarged northeast and southwest bulb-outs. The two commercial spaces appear shallow and hardly viable, and the Board requested more commercial uses along the Wall Street frontage. The Board requested the walkable sidewalk on Denny Way be widened, and/or the storefront be setback more.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting #2, the Board applauded the revisions that added depth and area to the ground floor commercial spaces, and the shifted transformer hatch. To further improve this now viable layout, the Board advised the following to best activate this critical location:

- Increase the depth of the retail at 6th and Wall to the structural bay (about 23 ft).
- Shift the leasing space along Denny to an upper level and replace it with a retail/commercial space at grade.
- To enlarge the corner areas, explore shifting the two exit stairs along Denny as far mid-block as possible (and keep them glass at grade as stated).
- At next meeting, provide a larger scale, full page ground floor plan that clearly shows all perimeter doors, solid and transparent wall changes, reveals and plane changes, and any stepped floor slabs (Board supported to eliminate steps to sidewalks). Plan should be consistent with perspectives and all elevations, in particular round versus square columns, vehicle lifts, loading doors, etc.

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 #1, the Board agreed the entire podium and ground floor facades require a design concept independent of the extruded tower above, incorporating maximized active uses at grade and the special opportunity of a triangular site seen fully from all sides (eg not boxed into a typical block).

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting #2, the Board agreed the podium had evolved well, but requested numerous explorations of the podium, tower and tower top described under A-2, B-2 and B-4 above.

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 #1, the Board supported the small parking portals and their basic two locations, and agreed transparent glass showing the operating car lifts would provide positive activation at the street and podium levels. The Board was concerned about the large square footage of residential ‘support spaces’ at grade, beyond a typical lobby and internal mailroom, and requested an explanation why the support spaces could not be located above the compressed and valuable street level.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting #2, the Board agreed the ground floor uses were more activating and appeared to be largely transparent, but requested the larger scale and unobscured elevations described under B-4 for confirmation. The Board supported the stated intent to keep the vehicle lifts transparent from ground to level 6, and to paint, light and finish off the interior walls of those lifts in a refined manner, which still celebrates the unique dynamic of the automated parking system.

D. Public Amenities

Enhancing the Streetscape & Open Space

- D-1 Provide Inviting & Usable Open Space.** Design public open spaces to promote a visually pleasing, safe, and active environment for workers, residents, and visitors. Views and solar access from the principal area of the open space should be especially emphasized.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting #1, the Board supported the expanded sidewalks and bulb-outs, and requested more detailed information on the plant species, pavers, furnishings, lighting and other landscape details at future meetings.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting #2, the Board supported the bulb-outs and widened sidewalk along Wall Street, and requested the site plan (page 24) show all the adjacent sidewalks and the proposed crosswalks to all corners of the project. The curb ramps shown on page 24 and 50/51 do not align with the crosswalks. The Board requested the next version of drawings clearly describe all paving materials and plant species, and describe seating blocks, cafe seating and other special features. The planter strips should be eased at the intersections to acknowledge pedestrian desire lines, and the landscape palette should accommodate the urban level of activity.

- 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 #1, the Board agreed the bulb outs, working in conjunction with the adjacent building edges and commercial uses, are the prime opportunity for public place-making on this site, and to repair a dead zone with no pedestrian amenity. This distinctive triangular site at the grid-shift, provides cues for a memorable site-specific landscape design of these bulb –outs, expressing the transition between neighborhoods.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting #2, the Board supported the proposed transparent and continuous canopies as shown on page 51, but was confused and not supportive of solid canopies suggested on page 45, or the higher one at the 6th and Wall corner. Provide a clear canopy plan, a rationale for the higher canopy, and integrate it into the podium redesign per B-2 guidance.

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 #1, the Board understood the parking portal locations are possibly optimum, but requested detailed and dimensioned sections to better understand the curving position and height of the ramps to level B1. If possible, the ramps should be re-positioned to increase the size, depth and viability of all commercial spaces.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting #2, the Board applauded the ramp sections which maximized the retail floor area, supported the ramp locations and the portal opening sizes. They requested detailed material descriptions of how these ramp walls and ceilings will be treated, since they will be visible to pedestrians down to level P-1.

- E-3 Minimize the Presence of Service Areas.** Locate service areas for trash dumpsters, loading docks, mechanical equipment, and the like away from the street front where possible. Screen from view those elements which for programmatic reasons cannot be located away from the street front.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting #1, the Board was very concerned that services such as transformer, storage, fire pump and similar are not activating to the streetfront, and requested explanations why these cannot be located on another level, so the ground floor active use can be maximized.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting #2, the Board discussed how the service areas appeared to be minimized at the perimeter, but requested more detailed information on the large scale elevations. The materials of the loading door, transformer, pump room and exits should provide transparency/translucency and pedestrian interest.

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.

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting #2, the following departures were requested:

1. **Façade Modulation (SMC 23.45.058.D.2):** In brief, the Code requires the maximum width of any façade above 85 ft. along the avenues (in this case 6th Ave) to be 120 ft wide. The proposed façade along 6th Avenue, above 85 ft, is 117 ft closest to the property line, with a 23 ft deep corner recess at the south end at the Wall street corner; the total width is 144 ft.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting #1, The Board indicated no support for these departures at this time, considering how the design concept and massing requires further study, and the development of a persuasive design-based rationale for this departure. The 162 ft length along Denny was particularly concerning, because there was no deep modulation of any type in that wall; however the Board agreed holding the corners might be warranted, if significant modulation (approaching the 15 ft code-required depth) in the middle is proposed.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting #2, the Board gave preliminary support for this specific departure, based on the deep 23 ft corner notch that effectively makes the façade and mass compliant with the 120 ft width. Regarding the Denny elevation, the code does not regulate that width, but the Board remains concerned about the composition of that 160 ft wide wall for guideline reasons, per comments under B-4.

2. **Alternative Use for Above Grade Parking (SMC 23.49.01.2):** In brief, the Code requires parking above the third story of a structure to be separated from the street by another use for a minimum of 30% of each street frontage. The applicant proposes art studios and the parking lifts from level 2-4, which total about 33% on the 6th Ave frontage; 38% of the Wall street frontage; and unknown on the Denny Way frontage.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting #1, The Board indicated preliminary support for counting the robotic elevator glass portions in the calculations, and for including alternative uses at level 2, but could not support this departure at this time considering the further study of the podium facades in the context of a more developed whole building concept. See comments under A-1, B-2, B-4.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting #2, the Board gave preliminary support for the transparent vehicle lifts counting as activating façade area, and for the alternative uses extending to level 2 at the corners, but much is contingent upon the studies of facade materials described under B-2 above. The Board also required a detailed tabulation and analysis of the minimum code-required amenity spaces, to verify that the corner and Denny facing amenity spaces could become actual living units rather than randomly

occupied workshops or wine gatherings. The Board prefers actual living units activate the lower levels of those spaces.

3. **Maximum Floors of Above Grade Parking (SMC 23.49.019.2.A.1):** The Code requires the maximum number of above grade parking stories to be four. The applicant proposes 5 levels of robotic parking, arguing they are lower floor to floor heights that almost equate (approximately 3 ft taller) to 4 conventional stories.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting #1, The Board indicated no support for this departure at this time, considering the entire podium composition and above grade parking distribution is under study. See comments under Departure 2 above, and A-1, B-2, B-4.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting #2, the Board gave preliminary support for the concept of 5 automated parking floors of lower floor heights, be considered equivalent to the code mandated 4 floor maximum, within the 3 -4 ft additional height range described, and fully contingent upon the successful resolution of the podium materials and composition described under B-2 above.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EDG #2 meeting, the Board recommended the project should move forwards to the MUP Application, responding to the specific concerns, requests and studies described above.