City of Seattle

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

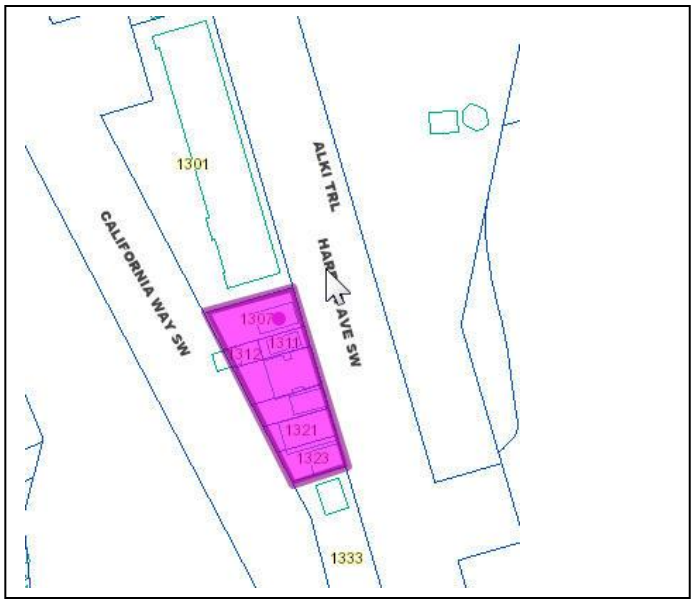
DESIGN REVIEW

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE
SOUTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number:	3015628
Address:	1307 Harbor Ave SW
Applicant:	Margaret Sprug of Miller Hull Partnership for YMSA USA, LLC
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, April 03, 2014
Board Members Present:	Laird Bennion (Acting Chair) Todd Bronk T. Frick McNamara Daniel Skaggs
Board Members Absent:	Myer Harrell
DPD Staff Present:	Shelley Bolser

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone:	NC2-65, MR, and LR1	
Nearby Zones:	(North)	MR and SF 9600
	(South)	NC2-65 and SF 7200
	(East)	SF 7200 and SF 5000
	(West)	MR and NC2-65
Lot Area:	21,014 square feet	



Current Development:

The development site is located on two street frontages and is steeply sloped down to the east, with several mature trees on the upper portion of the site. The site includes several early 20th century structures (3 residential structures and 2 commercial structures). Four of the structures are located on the lower portion of the lot facing Harbor Ave SW. The commercial structures are on the southern two parcels of the site. The residential structures are on the northern two parcels of the site and the western parcel. Approximately half of the residential structure on the western uphill parcel is constructed within the California Way SW public right of way. The middle parcel is currently undeveloped, but previously included a 2-story commercial structure that was demolished in 2003. All structures are proposed for demolition.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The site is located across Harbor Ave SW from Elliott Bay and the Don Armeni Boat Ramp. The surrounding area is predominantly residential on the upland side of Harbor Ave SW, with mostly parks, trails, and open space on the shoreline side of Harbor Ave SW.

The Don Armeni Boat Ramp includes a large surface parking lot. Harbor Ave SW provides the primary point of access along the waterfront, north around Alki Point, leading to Alki Beach Park to the west. Harbor Ave SW includes transit service routes and the water taxi to the south. The water taxi location includes a surface parking lot with small restaurant/retail, and a kayak rental facility.

The upland side of Harbor Ave SW includes mostly multi-family structures in a mix of ages and styles, with a few early 20th century single family residences. Commercial uses are located on the ground floor of a few buildings. The multi-family structures are designed mostly with horizontally expressed architecture, and balconies facing Harbor Ave SW and Elliott Bay.

Uphill to the west, the neighborhood quickly transitions to single family detached residential structures. The slope between the residences and Harbor Ave SW is steeply sloped and heavily vegetated. Hamilton Viewpoint Park is located uphill to the northwest of the site, with additional single family residential west of the Park. California Way SW connects Harbor Ave with the Admiral neighborhood near the top of the hill.

Access:

Existing vehicular access to the site is via curb cuts at Harbor Ave SW.

Environmentally Critical Areas and Vegetation:

The site includes Steep Slope Environmentally Critical Areas. The proposed development will require an Environmentally Critical Areas Steep Slope Variance, which will be reviewed at the Master Use Permit stage of application (SMC 25.09).

A Shoreline Overlay is located on the southeast corner of the site, which is subject to Shoreline Code requirements (SMC 23.60).

The site also includes several Exceptional Trees and potential Groves of trees. All trees in a defined Grove are treated as Exceptional Trees per SMC 25.11. The applicant proposes to retain all of the Exceptional Trees and Groves of trees.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed development is for a 6-story structure with 21 residential units, 11,800 square feet of office, 7,500 square feet of light manufacturing, 4,200 square feet of restaurant, and 6,700 square feet of retail. Parking for 41 vehicles is proposed below grade, accessed from a curb cut at Harbor Ave SW. Existing structures (residential and retail) to be demolished.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE April 3, 2014

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3015628) at this website: http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp.

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

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

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The applicant explained that massing options A and B respond to the constraints of the Environmentally Critical Areas including steep slope setback and shoreline overlay. Option A would require a car elevator to access very limited amount of parking above grade. Option B would require two curb cuts from Harbor Ave SW.

Option C includes a courtyard entry that allows a reduced front setback. A single curb cut would be required, with a one-way ramp to below grade parking.

Option D includes a breezeway in lieu of a courtyard open to the sky, with the same vehicular configuration as Option C. The curb cut is proposed near the north property line. Retail/restaurant space would be located on 3 levels adjacent to the breezeway.

The applicant provided conceptual design sketches at the EDG meeting, indicating the design intent for the architectural treatment of the proposed development. The applicant noted that the proposed mix of uses is at the request of a specific tenant. The light manufacturing use would be similar to a design studio. The first three floors of the building would each be 13' feet tall.

Landscaping is proposed on the rooftop terrace, the second floor terrace at the southeast corner, and the north edge.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. DPD summarized public comment letters received before the EDG meeting, listing concerns with existing zoning, height, proposed amount of parking, impacts to views from private property, relocation of a utility pole on Harbor Ave SW, and request for additional front (east) setback.
2. Appreciated the varied massing and the thoughtful analysis used to reach the preferred massing.
3. Supported Option D because it includes the most amount of residential.
4. The extreme varied modulation of Option A is appealing, and the resulting design should use materials/modulation/articulation to create some of the visual interest that could result from Option A.
5. The floor plan should be designed to avoid blocking the large windows with furniture or blinds, and the street level should be designed to maximize transparency.
6. Supported the proposed departures.
7. Content with the proposed building height.
8. The interesting massing of Option D presents the opportunity for a visually substantial design. Supported the proposed breezeway.
9. Questioned the size of the various uses proposed in the building.
10. Questioned apartments vs. condos. The applicant noted that the intent is for apartments.
11. Concerned about the hill stability, drainage, and trees.
12. The driveway location is a concern because it may conflict with the turning radii of the boat trailers exiting Don Armeni park and the curve in Harbor Ave SW.
13. Supported the thoughtful massing options and the proposed breezeway.
14. Supported the mix of uses and the creation of jobs in the West Seattle neighborhood.
15. Requested shadow studies at the next 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 provided the following siting and design guidance.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE April 3, 2014

1. **Massing and Design Concept.** The Board supported the preferred massing option and hill climb.
    a. The site location means the proposed development will be highly visible from the Alki Trail, Harbor Ave SW, the Water Taxi, the ferries crossing Elliott Bay, and from downtown Seattle across Elliott Bay. The massing and conceptual sketches indicate the intent to provide a strongly expressed massing and an interesting design. The Board supported the intent and recommended that the design should be iconic, with high quality carefully detailed materials. (CS2.A, DC2.A, DC2.B, DC2.D)
    b. The Board also supported the design intent to use massing and modulation to respond to the zoning change across the site and transition to adjacent sites. (CS2.D)
    c. The Board appreciated the potentially iconic placement of the stair at the south edge of the site and recommended it be glazed to encourage use by building occupants. The Board appreciated how the visibility of the stair circulation could relate to the design of the vertical hill climb circulation on the site. (DC1.A)

2. **Response to Site Challenges.** The Board acknowledged the challenges presented by the slope, shoreline overlay, and Exceptional Trees on site. The proposed design should continue to be developed in response to these challenges.
    a. The Board supported the intent to design the building to complement the natural setting of the slope and the landscape plan for native vegetation. (CS1, A, B, C, D, and E; DC3.C)
    b. The Board noted that Harbor Ave SW is subject to a large amount of bicycle traffic. The proposed design should accommodate the volume of cyclists that will access the restaurant/retail uses at the site, work in the office and light manufacturing uses, and live in the residential units. (PL4.B)
    c. The Board noted that plant materials and finishes should be chosen in response to the challenges of salt spray, given the proximity of Elliott Bay. (DC4.A, DC4.D)

3. **Breezeway/Hill Climb.** The Board supported the proposed breezeway/hill climb through the site. The edges and detail of this design will be an important aspect of the proposal.
    a. The Board discussed how the hill climb provides a break in the building massing, could add activity to the sidewalk on both street frontages, and will benefit from the residential entry and restaurant uses facing the breezeway. (PL1.B, PL3.A)
    b. The covered breezeway will be shaded, so the design should maximize light and air in this area. (PL1.B, PL2.B, DC4.C)
    c. If the breezeway will be secured in evening hours, the design of any gates should enhance the pedestrian streetscape and be consistent with the overall building design concept. (PL1.B, PL2.A, PL2.B)
    d. Any signage should be designed to be consistent with the architectural concept and pedestrian focus in the breezeway. (DC4.B)

4. **Services.** Solid waste storage should be accommodated within the building, away from the street frontage, and any staging areas should be designed to be outside of the pedestrian and vehicular circulation. (DC1.C.2 and 4)

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the Design Review website.

CONTEXT & SITE

CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features: Use natural systems/features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.

CS1-A Energy Use

CS1-A-1. Energy Choices: At the earliest phase of project development, examine how energy choices may influence building form, siting, and orientation, and factor in the findings when making siting and design decisions.

CS1-B Sunlight and Natural Ventilation

CS1-B-1. Sun and Wind: Take advantage of solar exposure and natural ventilation. Use local wind patterns and solar gain to reduce the need for mechanical ventilation and heating where possible.

CS1-B-2. Daylight and Shading: Maximize daylight for interior and exterior spaces and minimize shading on adjacent sites through the placement and/or design of structures on site.

CS1-B-3. Managing Solar Gain: Manage direct sunlight falling on south and west facing facades through shading devices and existing or newly planted trees.

CS1-C Topography

CS1-C-1. Land Form: Use natural topography and desirable landforms to inform project design.

CS1-C-2. Elevation Changes: Use the existing site topography when locating structures and open spaces on the site.

CS1-D Plants and Habitat

CS1-D-1. On-Site Features: Incorporate on-site natural habitats and landscape elements into project design and connect those features to existing networks of open spaces and natural habitats wherever possible. Consider relocating significant trees and vegetation if retention is not feasible.

CS1-D-2. Off-Site Features: Provide opportunities through design to connect to off-site habitats such as riparian corridors or existing urban forest corridors. Promote continuous habitat, where possible, and increase interconnected corridors of urban forest and habitat where possible.

CS1-E Water

CS1-E-1. Natural Water Features: If the site includes any natural water features, consider ways to incorporate them into project design, where feasible

CS1-E-2. Adding Interest with Project Drainage: Use project drainage systems as opportunities to add interest to the site through water-related design elements.

CS2 Urban Pattern and Form: Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.

CS2-A Location in the City and Neighborhood

CS2-A-1. Sense of Place: Emphasize attributes that give a distinctive sense of place. Design the building and open spaces to enhance areas where a strong identity already exists, and create a sense of place where the physical context is less established.

CS2-A-2. Architectural Presence: Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly.

CS2-D Height, Bulk, and Scale

CS2-D-1. Existing Development and Zoning: Review the height, bulk, and scale of neighboring buildings as well as the scale of development anticipated by zoning for the area to determine an appropriate complement and/or transition.

CS2-D-2. Existing Site Features: Use changes in topography, site shape, and vegetation or structures to help make a successful fit with adjacent properties.

CS2-D-3. Zone Transitions: For projects located at the edge of different zones, provide an appropriate transition or complement to the adjacent zone(s). Projects should create a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zone and the proposed development.

CS2-D-5. Respect for Adjacent Sites: Respect adjacent properties with design and site planning to minimize disrupting the privacy of residents in adjacent buildings.

PUBLIC LIFE

PL1 Connectivity: Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.

PL1-B Walkways and Connections

PL1-B-1. Pedestrian Infrastructure: Connect on-site pedestrian walkways with existing public and private pedestrian infrastructure, thereby supporting pedestrian connections within and outside the project.

PL1-B-2. Pedestrian Volumes: Provide ample space for pedestrian flow and circulation, particularly in areas where there is already heavy pedestrian traffic or where the project is expected to add or attract pedestrians to the area.

PL1-B-3. Pedestrian Amenities: Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian oriented open spaces to enliven the area and attract interest and interaction with the site and building should be considered.

PL2 Walkability: Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.

PL2-A Accessibility

PL2-A-1. Access for All: Provide access for people of all abilities in a manner that is fully integrated into the project design. Design entries and other primary access points such that all visitors can be greeted and welcomed through the front door.

PL2-A-2. Access Challenges: Add features to assist pedestrians in navigating sloped sites, long blocks, or other challenges.

PL2-B Safety and Security

PL2-B-1. Eyes on the Street: Create a safe environment by providing lines of sight and encouraging natural surveillance.

PL2-B-2. Lighting for Safety: Provide lighting at sufficient lumen intensities and scales, including pathway illumination, pedestrian and entry lighting, and/or security lights.

PL2-B-3. Street-Level Transparency: Ensure transparency of street-level uses (for uses such as nonresidential uses or residential lobbies), where appropriate, by keeping views open into spaces behind walls or plantings, at corners, or along narrow passageways.

PL2-C Weather Protection

PL2-C-1. Locations and Coverage: Overhead weather protection is encouraged and should be located at or near uses that generate pedestrian activity such as entries, retail uses, and transit stops.

PL2-C-2. Design Integration: Integrate weather protection, gutters and downspouts into the design of the structure as a whole, and ensure that it also relates well to neighboring buildings in design, coverage, or other features.

PL2-C-3. People-Friendly Spaces: Create an artful and people-friendly space beneath building.

PL2-D Wayfinding

PL2-D-1. Design as Wayfinding: Use design features as a means of wayfinding wherever possible.

PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.

PL3-A Entries

PL3-A-1. Design Objectives: Design primary entries to be obvious, identifiable, and distinctive with clear lines of sight and lobbies visually connected to the street.

PL3-A-2. Common Entries: Multi-story residential buildings need to provide privacy and security for residents but also be welcoming and identifiable to visitors.

PL3-A-3. Individual Entries: Ground-related housing should be scaled and detailed appropriately to provide for a more intimate type of entry.

PL3-A-4. Ensemble of Elements: Design the entry as a collection of coordinated elements including the door(s), overhead features, ground surface, landscaping, lighting, and other features.

PL4 Active Transportation: Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.

PL4-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists

PL4-B-1. Early Planning: Consider existing and future bicycle traffic to and through the site early in the process so that access and connections are integrated into the project along with other modes of travel.

PL4-B-2. Bike Facilities: Facilities such as bike racks and storage, bike share stations, shower facilities and lockers for bicyclists should be located to maximize convenience, security, and safety.

PL4-B-3. Bike Connections: Facilitate connections to bicycle trails and infrastructure around and beyond the project.

DESIGN CONCEPT

DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

DC1-A Arrangement of Interior Uses

DC1-A-1. Visibility: Locate uses and services frequently used by the public in visible or prominent areas, such as at entries or along the street front.

DC1-A-2. Gathering Places: Maximize the use of any interior or exterior gathering spaces.

DC1-A-3. Flexibility: Build in flexibility so the building can adapt over time to evolving needs, such as the ability to change residential space to commercial space as needed.

DC1-A-4. Views and Connections: Locate interior uses and activities to take advantage of views and physical connections to exterior spaces and uses.

DC1-C Parking and Service Uses

DC1-C-4. Service Uses: Locate and design service entries, loading docks, and trash receptacles away from pedestrian areas or to a less visible portion of the site to reduce possible impacts of these facilities on building aesthetics and pedestrian circulation.

DC2 Architectural Concept: Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.

DC2-A Massing

DC2-A-1. Site Characteristics and Uses: Arrange the mass of the building taking into consideration the characteristics of the site and the proposed uses of the building and its open space.

DC2-A-2. Reducing Perceived Mass: Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of larger projects.

DC2-B Architectural and Facade Composition

DC2-B-1. Façade Composition: Design all building facades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all facades are attractive and well-proportioned.

DC2-B-2. Blank Walls: Avoid large blank walls along visible façades wherever possible. Where expanses of blank walls, retaining walls, or garage facades are unavoidable, include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians.

DC2-C Secondary Architectural Features

DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest: Add depth to facades where appropriate by incorporating balconies, canopies, awnings, decks, or other secondary elements into the façade design. Add detailing at the street level in order to create interest for the pedestrian and encourage active street life and window shopping (in retail areas).

DC2-C-2. Dual Purpose Elements: Consider architectural features that can be dual purpose— adding depth, texture, and scale as well as serving other project functions.

DC2-C-3. Fit With Neighboring Buildings: Use design elements to achieve a successful fit between a building and its neighbors.

DC2-D Scale and Texture

DC2-D-1. Human Scale: Incorporate architectural features, elements, and details that are of human scale into the building facades, entries, retaining walls, courtyards, and exterior spaces in a manner that is consistent with the overall architectural concept

DC2-D-2. Texture: Design the character of the building, as expressed in the form, scale, and materials, to strive for a fine-grained scale, or "texture," particularly at the street level and other areas where pedestrians predominate.

DC2-E Form and Function

DC2-E-1. Legibility and Flexibility: Strive for a balance between building use legibility and flexibility. Design buildings such that their primary functions and uses can be readily determined from the exterior, making the building easy to access and understand. At the same time, design flexibility into the building so that it may remain useful over time even as specific programmatic needs evolve.

DC3 Open Space Concept: Integrate open space design with the building design so that they complement each other.

DC3-C Design

DC3-C-3. Support Natural Areas: Create an open space design that retains and enhances onsite natural areas and connects to natural areas that may exist off-site and may provide habitat for wildlife.

DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.

DC4-A Exterior Elements and Finishes

DC4-A-2. Climate Appropriateness: Select durable and attractive materials that will age well in Seattle's climate, taking special care to detail corners, edges, and transitions.

DC4-B Signage

DC4-B-1. Scale and Character: Add interest to the streetscape with exterior signs and attachments that are appropriate in scale and character to the project and its environs.

DC4-B-2. Coordination with Project Design: Develop a signage plan within the context of architectural and open space concepts, and coordinate the details with façade design, lighting, and other project features to complement the project as a whole, in addition to the surrounding context.

DC4-C Lighting

DC4-C-1. Functions: Use lighting both to increase site safety in all locations used by pedestrians and to highlight architectural or landscape details and features such as entries, signs, canopies, plantings, and art.

DC4-C-2. Avoiding Glare: Design project lighting based upon the uses on and off site, taking care to provide illumination to serve building needs while avoiding off-site night glare and light pollution.

DC4-D Trees, Landscape, and Hardscape Materials

DC4-D-1. Choice of Plant Materials: Reinforce the overall architectural and open space design concepts through the selection of landscape materials.

DC4-D-2. Hardscape Materials: Use exterior courtyards, plazas, and other hard surfaced areas as an opportunity to add color, texture, and/or pattern and enliven public areas through the use of distinctive and durable paving materials. Use permeable materials wherever possible.
DC4-D-3. Long Range Planning: Select plants that upon maturity will be of appropriate size, scale, and shape to contribute to the site as intended.
DC4-D-4. Place Making: Create a landscape design that helps define spaces with significant elements such as trees.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

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

1. **Side Yard Setback (SMC 23.45.518.B):** The Code requires that a minimum 5' and average 7' side yard setback for portions of structures less than 42' tall in Midrise zones. The applicant proposes to locate the first 16'4" of wall height at the north property line and set back 10' above that, to allow for screening of the parking ramp and prevent headlights from pointing up into the adjacent residential building and small trees to screen the upper part of the north building façade above the street level. The setback would include vegetation above the screened parking ramp.

   The Board indicated preliminary support for the proposed departure. At the Recommendation meeting, the applicant should demonstrate how the proposed departure results in a design that better meets the intent of the Design Review Guidelines.

2. **Front Yard Setback (SMC 23.45.518.B):** The Code requires a 7' average and 5' minimum front yard setback in Midrise zones, unless a courtyard is provided. The courtyard must have minimum dimensions described in this Code section (and in the EDG packet), and must be open to the sky. The applicant proposes a 3' story tall mid-building pedestrian connection ("breezeway") with stairs between Harbor Ave SW and California Way SW, with building structure above the breezeway. This would provide a usable pedestrian connection across the site, but the dimensions of the connection would not meet courtyard minimums, and the connection would be partially covered by building structure.

   The Board indicated preliminary support for the departure, depending on the proposed design of the breezeway/hill climb. At the Recommendation meeting, the applicant should demonstrate how the proposed departure results in a design that better meets the intent of the Design Review Guidelines.

3. **Sight Triangle (SMC 23.54.030.G):** The Code requires 10' wide sight triangles for two-way driveways that are 22' or wider. The applicant proposes a combination of safety features (warning lights, safety mirrors, and paving changes) in lieu of sight triangles.

The Board indicated preliminary support for the departure, but the design of the driveway ramp should include a level landing area for vehicles before they enter the sidewalk, and design the edge of the garage to create pedestrian safety.

At the Recommendation meeting, the applicant should demonstrate how the proposed departure results in a design that better meets the intent of the Design Review Guidelines.

4. **Vehicle Backing Distances (SMC 23.54.030.C.2):** The Code allows maximum backing distances of 50' for parking lots for more than three vehicles. The applicant proposes a backing distance of 100' within the garage, to minimize the amount of internal ramping and avoid a second curb cut to the garage.

   The Board indicated preliminary support for the proposed departure, but would like to see the applicant examine the potential for modifying the parking to allow a hammerhead turnaround inside the garage. At the Recommendation meeting, the applicant should demonstrate how the proposed departure results in a design that better meets the intent of the Design Review Guidelines.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application. Per DPD staff direction, the Board understands that the ECA variance and shoreline reviews will need to be substantially complete before the Design Recommendation meeting, and those reviews could result in changes to the building massing. If the ECA variance or shoreline decisions result in a different massing than the preferred option, the Board noted that additional EDG level review of massing options will be required prior to a Recommendation.