City of Seattle

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

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE
QUEEN ANNE/ MAGNOLIA (WEST) DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

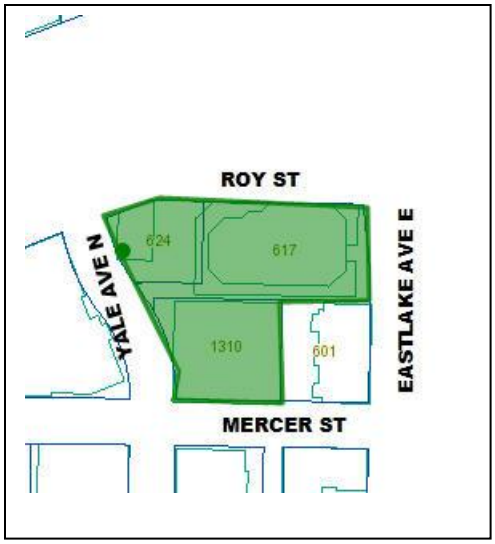
Project Number:	3016059
Address:	624 Yale Avenue North
Applicant:	Jon Hall of GGLO for The Blume Company
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, December 11, 2013
Board Members Present:	Mindy Black (Chair) Kate Idziorek Jill Kurfirst Boyd Pickrell Janet Stephenson
DPD Staff Present:	Shelley Bolser

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: SM-85

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

Lot Area: 60,190 square feet



Current Development:	The site occupies most of a block bounded by the southbound I-5 on-ramp, Roy St, Eastlake Ave E, Mercer St, and Yale Ave N. The site is occupied by three commercial buildings constructed in the 20th century, with surface and underground parking.
Access:	Existing vehicular access is via curb cuts at Roy St and Yale Ave N. The existing building and parking garage on the northeast portion of the site will be retained. The site is not adjacent to any alleys.
Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:	The surrounding development is a mix of uses and age of structures. Nearby development includes older 1-2 story commercial structures, early 20th century residential structure, mid to late 20th century multi-story office structures, and a recently constructed mixed-use development with a variety of office, retail, and residential uses. The area was recently rezoned from SM-75 to SM-85. Several historic landmarks are located nearby. A historic landmark (the Jensen Block residential building) is located on the southeast portion of this block, adjacent to two sides of the subject property. Recreational opportunities include Lake Union a few blocks to the northwest and Cascade Playground a few blocks to the southwest. The area offers frequent transit service, including the South Lake Union Streetcar 6 blocks to the west, and several nearby bus routes.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a 9-story structure with 200 residential units and parking for 150 vehicles below grade. The existing structures on the west half of the site would be demolished. The existing structure on the northeast corner of the site would be retained.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: December 11, 2013

DESIGN PRESENTATION

The EDG packet includes materials presented at the EDG meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3016059) at this website: http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp.

The EDG packet is also available to view in the 3016059 EDG 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

The applicant noted that the proposed hillclimb shown in the packet is intended to be a series of stoops and landings to create grade transitions to the street level residential units on Mercer St. Zero feet to five feet is proposed as the setback in these areas.

The pedestrian connection between the two buildings on Yale Ave N. is anticipated to be 20-30' in width. The connection would allow access from Yale Ave N. through to Roy St, in response to the existing pedestrian routes that people use to access Lakeview Ave across I-5. The connection would also allow people to climb stairs to continue the connection across the adjacent office building over to Eastlake Ave.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Comments and questions included the following:

- Active uses such as retail or public open space should be included at the ground level, rather than only residential.
- The proposed height is taller than nearby recent development and should respond to that context.
- The public asked when demolition may begin.
    - The applicant responded that they hope to begin demolition in December 2014.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE (DECEMBER 11, 2013):

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.

1. **Parking Access Alternatives**: The Board was divided on the subject of the garage entry location. A location on the busy and steeply sloped Mercer Street may create long queuing for cars exiting the driveway, which would result in increased exhaust and noise for residents at street level. A location at Yale Ave N would reduce the usable residential pedestrian/courtyard area. The Board noted a possible alternative may include a one-way garage access at Yale Ave N. and a one-way garage access at Roy St. The Board also directed the applicant to explore the potential for using the existing garage on the office building portion of the site for the residential parking needs.

a. At the Recommendation meeting, the applicant should demonstrate how the parking access is designed in response to the adjacent street level context, and how the parking access is designed to minimize visual and physical impacts to the pedestrian environment. The Board noted that a vehicular entry on Yale Ave N should be designed to complement the pedestrian traffic at the lobby entry and the courtyard, similar to woonerf designs. (A-1, A-7, A-8, C-5, D-12)

2. **Massing Alternatives and Design Concept**: The Board was supportive of the preferred massing alternative.
    a. The Board supported the proposed upper level setback and suggested that extending the upper level setback to part of the south façade may help to create a better transition in massing to the lower residential buildings to the south. (B-1)
    b. The Board recommended that the design of the two buildings result in a visual distinction as two buildings, rather than one large building. Each building should present a unified design concept, but the buildings should be treated differently. (C-1, C-2, C-4)
    c. The Board supported the intent of a significant design move at the bay of the 'north' building above the residential lobby. The Board noted that a visual focus is a positive response to the context of the grid shift on Yale Ave N, and serves to emphasize the proposed residential lobby at street level. The Board recommended that this design move should be a strongly expressed architectural form, rather than a minor material change or flourish. (A-4, A-6, C-2, C-4, D-12)
    d. Each street frontage should be designed in response to the context of the adjacent street. For instance, Yale Ave N. is a quieter street suited to residential stoops. Mercer Street is steeply sloped with more traffic, which is better suited to commercial storefront design. (A-1, A-2, A-4, A-6)
    e. The Board directed the applicant to provide street level entries for residences at street level. Stoops, patios, and landscaping should be used to create a visual buffer for residents at street level, to discourage closed blinds 24/7. (A-1, A-2, A-4, A-6)

3. **Open Space Design**. The proposed design should maximize opportunities for views, solar access opportunities for pedestrians, and private open space should be designed to maximize pedestrian safety.
    a. The design concept should maximize views to the north from the residential open spaces and the public pathway on the north side of the site. The Board noted that this is a significant view opportunity to Lake Union because of the location of the I-5 on ramp adjacent to the site. The views warrant pedestrian enhancement of the public pathway on the north side of the site. (A-1, D-1)
    b. The Board recognized the challenge of buffering the I-5 noise at the site. Landscaping should be designed to mitigate the impacts of noise in the residential open spaces and pedestrian walkways.
    c. The Board supported the proposed design intent to maximize the solar access on the west street frontage for pedestrians and residents adjacent to the site. (A-1, D-1)

d. The Board was unclear about the nature of the proposed pedestrian connection through the site. If the connection is intended for public use, it should be designed to appear public and welcoming. If it is intended for private use, it should be designed to maximize safety for residents and office workers (clear sight lines, lighting, glazed building areas fronting the connection, etc.). (D-1, D-7)
e. The Board noted that the hillclimb identified for Mercer Street is actually intended as private residential open space with a series of landings and stoops. The design of these areas should provide at least 5-7' of depth for usable patio space.

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

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

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

A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics. The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- **Encourage provision of "outlooks and overlooks" for the public to view the lake and cityscapes. Examples include provision of public plazas and/or other public open spaces and changing the form or facade setbacks of the building to enhance opportunities for views.**
- **Minimize shadow impacts to Cascade Park.**
- **New development is encouraged to take advantage of site configuration to accomplish sustainability goals. The Board is generally willing to recommend departures from development standards if they are needed to achieve sustainable design. Refer to the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design*(LEED) manual which provides additional information. Examples include:**
  - Solar orientation
  - Storm water run-off, detention and filtration systems
  - Sustainable landscaping
  - Versatile building design for entire building life cycle

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

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

The vision for street level uses in South Lake Union is a completed network of sidewalks that successfully accommodate pedestrians. Streetscape compatibility

is a high priority of the neighborhood with redevelopment. Sidewalk-related spaces should appear safe, welcoming and open to the general public.

- **Provide pedestrian-friendly streetscape amenities, such as: tree grates; benches; lighting.**
- **Encourage provision of spaces for street level uses that vary in size, width, and depth. Encourage the use of awnings and weather protection along street fronts to enhance the pedestrian environment.**
- **Where appropriate, consider a reduction in the required amount of commercial and retail space at the ground level, such as in transition zones between commercial and residential areas. Place retail in areas that are conducive to the use and will be successful.**
- **Where appropriate, configure retail space so that it can spill-out onto the sidewalk (retaining six feet for pedestrian movement, where the sidewalk is sufficiently wide).**

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

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- **Create graceful transitions at the streetscape level between the public and private uses.**
- **Keep neighborhood connections open, and discourage closed campuses.**
- **Design facades to encourage activity to spill out from business onto the sidewalk, and vice-versa.**
- **Reinforce pedestrian connections both within the neighborhood and to other adjacent neighborhoods. Transportation infrastructure should be designed with adjacent sidewalks, as development occurs to enhance pedestrian connectivity.**
- **Reinforce retail concentrations with compatible spaces that encourage pedestrian activity.**
- **Create businesses and community activity clusters through co-location of retail and pedestrian uses as well as other high pedestrian traffic opportunities.**
- **Design for a network of safe and well-lit connections to encourage human activity and link existing high activity areas.**

A-6 <u>Transition Between Residence and Street</u>. For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

Consider designing the entries of residential buildings to enhance the character of the streetscape through the use of small gardens, stoops and other elements to create a transition between the public and private areas. Consider design options to accommodate various residential uses, i.e., townhouse, live-work, apartment and senior-assisted housing.

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.**

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.**

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- **Address both the pedestrian and auto experience through building placement, scale and details with specific attention to regional transportation corridors such as Mercer, Aurora, Fairview and Westlake. These locations, pending changes in traffic patterns, may evolve with transportation improvements.**
- **Encourage stepping back an elevation at upper levels for development taller than 55 feet to take advantage of views and increase sunlight at street level. Where stepping back upper floors is not practical or appropriate other design considerations may be considered, such as modulations or separations between structures.**
- **Relate proportions of buildings to the width and scale of the street.**
- **Articulate the building facades vertically or horizontally in intervals that relate to the existing structures or existing pattern of development in the vicinity.**
- **Consider using architectural features to reduce building scale such as: landscaping; trellis; complementary materials; detailing; accent trim.**

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.**

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- **Support the existing fine-grained character of the neighborhood with a mix of building styles.**
- **Re-use and preserve important buildings and landmarks when possible.**
- **Expose historic signs and vintage advertising on buildings where possible.**
- **Respond to the history and character in the adjacent vicinity in terms of patterns, style, and scale. Encourage historic character to be revealed and reclaimed, for example through use of community artifacts, and historic materials, forms and textures.**
- **Respond to the working class, maritime, commercial and industrial character of the Waterfront and Westlake areas. Examples of elements to consider include: window detail patterns; open bay doors; sloped roofs.**
- **Respond to the unique, grass roots, sustainable character of the Cascade neighborhood. Examples of elements to consider include: community artwork; edible**

gardens; water filtration systems that serve as pedestrian amenities; gutters that support greenery.

C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency. Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

Design the "fifth elevation" — the roofscape — in addition to the streetscape. As this area topographically is a valley, the roofs may be viewed from locations outside the neighborhood such as the freeway and Space Needle. Therefore, views from outside the area as well as from within the neighborhood should be considered, and roof-top elements should be organized to minimize view impacts from the freeway and elevated areas.

C-5 Structured Parking Entrances. The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.

D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances. Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- **New developments are encouraged to work with the Design Review Board and interested citizens to provide features that enhance the public realm, i.e. the transition zone between private property and the public right of way. The Board is generally willing to consider a departure in open space requirements if the project proponent provides an acceptable plan for features such as: curb bulbs adjacent to active retail spaces where they are not interfering with primary corridors that are designated for high levels of traffic flow; pedestrian-oriented street lighting; street furniture.**

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

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

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

D-12 **Residential Entries and Transitions. For residential projects in commercial zones, the space between the residential entry and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and a visually interesting street front for pedestrians. Residential buildings should enhance the character of the streetscape with small gardens, stoops and other elements that work to create a transition between the public sidewalk and private entry.**

E-3 **Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions. The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.**

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

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

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

No departures were requested at the time of the EDG meeting.

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.