



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3016187

Address: 5601 22nd Ave NW

Applicant: Tony Fan of Studio Meng Strazzara for Lake Union Building, LLC

Date of Meeting: Monday, December 16, 2013

Board Members Present: Mike DeLilla (Acting Chair)  
Ellen Cecil  
Jerry Coburn  
David Neiman

Board Members Absent: Ted Panton

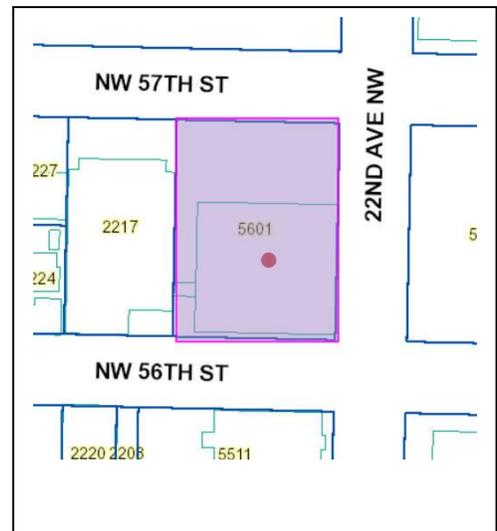
DPD Staff Present: Shelley Bolser

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: NC3-65 and NC3P-65

Nearby Zones: (North) NC3-65 and NC3P-65  
(South) NC3-65 and NC3P-65  
(East) NC3P-65; MR-RC to the northwest  
(West) NC3-65

Lot Area: 30,000 square feet



**Current Development:** The site is located at a site in Central Ballard, bounded by NW 57th St on the north, 22nd Ave NW on the east, and NW 56th St on the south. The site is currently occupied by a one-story commercial building constructed in 1941 (Bartell Drugs) and a surface parking lot.

**Access:** Existing vehicular access is via curb cuts at NW 57th St, 22nd Ave NW, and access to a parking lot on an adjacent site to the west.

The surrounding development is a mix of uses and age of structures. Nearby development includes older 1-2 story commercial office and retail/restaurant structures and newer 6-7 story office, residential, and retail mixed-use structures.

**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:** The Ballard Library and recently constructed Greenfire campus are located to the east across 22nd Ave NW. 20th century residential with some newer construction residential is located to the north. Recently constructed multi-family and retail mixed use development is located to the west along 24th Ave NW, and further to the east beyond 20th Ave NW. NW Market St is a busy commercial corridor located a block to the south and includes several 1-4 story older commercial structures. Historic Ballard is located south of NW Market St and includes additional commercial uses in primarily early 20th century masonry buildings.

The area offers frequent transit service, including several bus lines on NW Market Street to the south, 24th Ave NW two blocks to the west, and the Rapid Ride D Line on 15th Ave NW, seven blocks to the east. Cycling and walking are common modes of transportation in this area of Ballard.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposal is for a 7-story structure including 82 residential units, 20,000 square feet of office space, 20,000 square feet of retail space, and parking for 131 vehicles below grade.

<b>EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: December 16, 2013</b>
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## **DESIGN PRESENTATION**

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3016187) at this website:  
[http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design\\_Review\\_Program/Project\\_Reviews/Reports/default.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp).

The packet is also available to view in the 3016187 file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

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

**Email:** [PRC@seattle.gov](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

At the EDG meeting, the applicant noted the intent to extend the curb out into 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave NW, which would widen the sidewalk to align with the curb line at Ballard Commons Park.

The proposed development includes a base that covers most of the site, with two multi-story structures above. The applicant referred to the separate upper portions of the building as the “north building” and the “south building.”

The proposed landscape plan includes a rooftop garden on the south building with p-patches and informal plantings, and a more formal outdoor deck and enclosed amenity area at the north building.

The applicant clarified that the north portion of the building includes retail and residential at street level, office levels above, and a top floor of residential overlooking the Ballard Commons Park. The eastern area of the massing proposed stepped setbacks and a courtyard to respond to the open space at the west edge of the Library and to minimize shadows cast on the Library west entry. The retail and residential lobby would both be accessed from this courtyard.

The townhouse style units at the north edge of the site were proposed to be approximately 19' deep and would be accessed from the street frontage, in order to activate the street. The applicant noted that the preferred option provides approximately 75% of the maximum Floor Area Ratio possible at this site.

The applicant explained that part of the design intent is to respond to the cycling culture in Ballard and provide safe storage for bicycles. Each residential level is proposed to include bicycle storage adjacent to the elevators.

A shared vehicle access and loading area is proposed at NW 56<sup>th</sup> St near the southwest corner of the site. Solid waste storage and collection would be located off the loading bay at NW 56<sup>th</sup> St.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Comments and questions included the following:

- The central lobby between two building masses doesn't respond well to the nearby context. The retail entry at the courtyard gives the impression that the building turns its back on the street frontage.
- To relate to the nearby 1-2 story scale, a canopy or other design move should be used in the courtyard.

- The setback on the north side above the townhouses is a nice response to the lower height context and should be extended to 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave NW.
- Look to old Ballard for design cues for materials and colors. The two buildings on the corner of 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave NW and NW Market St offer good examples of quality materials and detailing.
- Questioned whether Bartell's would return to the site. [*The applicant responded that the retail space has been designed to accommodate them, but they haven't committed to return to this site.*]
- The townhouses and associated landscaping should be designed in the spirit of brownstones.
- The residential lobby entrance should be designed to accommodate people with mobility needs (wheelchairs, strollers, etc.).
- The courtyard should be sufficiently wide to accommodate the residential and retail entries, if that's the function.
- The courtyard should be designed to be welcoming to public use, rather than just an entry point.
- Appreciated the wider sidewalk on 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave NW.
- The residential parking should be secured from the exterior and from the other parking uses.
- The townhouse units should be designed to be ADA accessible from the street frontage.
- The elevator/stair towers at street frontage should be relocated internal to the building. The proposed location dominates the street frontage and creates a large blank wall.

## 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 (DECEMBER 16, 2013):

1. **Massing Options.** The preferred massing option with reduced FAR and the appearance of two buildings is a successful response to the context and treatment of scale.
  - a. The Board appreciated the proposed setback above the townhouses, since it enhances the architectural concept by expressing the different unit type. (A-2, C-2)
  - b. The Board discussed extending the setback to the east façade, but noted that the east façade includes office levels over a building base, with stacked flat residential units. There are no 2-story uses proposed on the east façade, so extending the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor setback to this façade would weaken the use of the setback to express the townhouse units on the north façade. (B-1, C-2)
  - c. The Board noted that the visible and wide separation between the upper levels of the buildings is a positive response to reduce the appearance of bulk and scale at 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave NW. (B-1)

2. **Streetscape.** The Board supported the proposed sidewalk widening on 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave NW.
  - a. The Board noted that while the extended curb line may restrict traffic flow on 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave NW, the wider sidewalk would provide a better response to the Design Review Guidelines. (A-2, A-4, D-1)
  - b. The Board supported the overall proposed landscaping plan, but noted that street level landscaping should not be placed between the retail spaces and the sidewalk. (A-2, E-2)
3. **Residential and Retail Entries.**
  - a. The townhouse style units should be designed with sufficient stoops to provide usable space, activate the street frontage, and accommodate sufficient screening and visual separation for residents as viewed from the sidewalk. (A-1, A-2, A-4, A-6, D-12, E-1, E-2)
  - b. The Board discussed the possibility of designing the townhouse style units to allow wheeled access, but recommended that the stoop and separation from the sidewalk are a higher priority for these particular units. (A-1, A-2, A-6, D-12, E-2)
  - c. The entry for the north retail space (for the larger space) should be designed to maximize human activity at the street frontage and provide a sufficient transition to the sidewalk. The Board noted that a courtyard entry location could help to activate the courtyard, but may detract from human activation along the north part of the block. A street frontage entry would activate the north portion of the block, but may result in a less active courtyard area. (A-1, A-2, A-4, D-1)
  - d. The residential entry should be designed to be visually obvious from the street frontage, welcoming to residents and visitors, and activate the courtyard. The Board noted that the entry as shown at the EDG meeting appears to be too deeply recessed to relate well to the street frontage. A wider east courtyard would help to make the entry more obvious and welcoming and relate better to the Ballard Library frontage. (A-2, C-2, D-6, D-12)
  - e. The retail spaces should be designed for maximum transparency, commercial lighting, and opportunities for signage. (D-9, D-10, D-11)
4. **Vehicular Access.** The Board agreed that NW 56<sup>th</sup> seemed to be the best option for placement of the driveways.
  - a. The proposed garage entry should be designed to be safe for users and pedestrians, and designed to minimize visual impacts to the street frontage. (A-10, C-5, D-6, D-7)
  - b. The Board expressed some concern about the proposed solid waste storage at the loading dock and will want to see how the proposed design meets the Design Review Guidelines. (D-6)
  - c. Any blank walls resulting from the garage structure should be treated for human scale and visual interest (C-3, D-2)
5. **Architectural Concept and Materials.** A strong architectural expression, cohesive design, and high quality materials are required at this site.
  - a. The Board called out the 1620 Broadway example in the EDG packet as a positive example of a strongly expressed concept. (C-2)

- b. The design concept should be iconic, coherent and offer a strong consistent architectural concept. (A-10, C-2, C-3, C-4)
- c. The materials should be durable, natural materials reflecting the context of nearby Ballard buildings. Nearby examples of high quality materials may be found in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings at 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave NW and NW Market St, as well as newer nearby contemporary styled development (Greenfire and the Ballard Library). (C-1, C-4)
- d. The Board clarified that while the 1620 Broadway example in the EDG packet is a good example of strong design concept, the material palette of that project is not well suited to this particular location. (C-1, C-3, C-4)

## **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.**

**Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Development Surrounding the Park**

- **West, North and East sides of the park: Buildings are encouraged to create a consistent two-story street wall with ground related entries. Development above the base should be set back and/or modulated to increase solar exposure to the street and other public places.**
- **South side of the park: Cultural and civic uses are planned in this area. However, if mixed use development occurs, a consistent street wall with a two story minimum base is encouraged. Development should be set back above the two story height and/or modulated in a manner that enhances solar exposure to the park.**

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

**Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Development Surrounding the Park**

- **West, North and East sides of the park: Townhouse style design is appropriate at street level adjacent to the park. Residential developments that provide units that directly access the public right-of-way are preferred since they help enliven the street environment. Sidewalk-related spaces should appear safe and welcoming.**

- South side of the park: If mixed use development occurs around the park, it is desirable to provide active storefronts along the entire south edge of NW 57th Street, west of 22nd Avenue NW, and a consistent street wall with a two-story minimum height.
- Mixed Use and Residential on East-West Streets: Buildings should maintain a consistent street wall up to a minimum of two story development and provide a setback(s), particularly on the south side of the street, beyond three stories to enhance solar access to the street and avoid a ‘canyon’. Deviations from the consistent street wall should be allowed for public usable open spaces. Where appropriate, mid-block pedestrian connections are strongly encouraged. The Design Review Board may consider a departure to reduce open space requirements in exchange for a mid-block pedestrian connection. Such spaces shall be sited and designed in a manner that is clearly public in nature and engaging to pedestrians.

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

Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:

Development Surrounding the Park

- West side: Access to the front doors of townhouse residences should be provided via a paved and well lit pedestrian connection. The non-residential development west of the park should provide at least two separate retail entrances on 24th Avenue NW. Residential access (both vehicular and pedestrian) is most appropriate on NW 58<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Streets: The mid block pedestrian connection should foster social contact in a safe environment. New development is highly encouraged to front retail and/or townhouse style units on the mid block connection at street level. To further promote vitality and safety in the pedestrian experience, entries to retail and townhouse units should be placed in an identifiable and engaging manner.

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

Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:

Development Surrounding the Park

- South side: Setbacks from the property line should be allowed up to ten feet consistent with pedestrian zoning requirements for outdoor activity.
- Mixed Use Development on Avenues: Commercial uses are encouraged to setback in order to provide opportunities for pedestrian activities where appropriate.

**A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street.** 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.

Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:

- West side of the park: For residential units with direct access to the street, a ten foot

landscaped setback or pedestrian walkway immediately adjacent to the park property edge is recommended with a low landscaped fence or low hedge to help define the relationship between the property and the park edge.

- North and East sides: New development should provide a landscaped fence or low, dense hedge to help define the street edge. No more than a ten foot setback to provide an effective transition between townhouse units and the public realm is desirable. In general, the landscaped setback from the park to the building edge should be integrated as an extension of the mid-block pedestrian connection system.
- Single Use residential: Townhouse or other residential developments that have direct unit entrances on the sidewalk are encouraged. New development should mark the property line with a landscaped fence or low hedge planting to enhance the continuity of the street.

**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.

**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.

Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:

Development Surrounding the Park

- West, North and East sides of the park: In general, the overall development massing should maximize the solar access to the park through careful massing arrangement of the upper levels, set back above a two-story base containing townhouse style units.
- South side of the park: Civic and cultural uses are anticipated to be developed along the south edge of the park. However if mixed use development does occur, it should provide a consistent street wall with a two-story minimum height. Development should be set back above the two story height and/or modulate the facade to enhance solar exposure to the park.
- Mixed Use Development on North-Side Avenues: Buildings should maintain a consistent street wall up to a minimum of two stories and provide a setback(s), particularly on the west side of the avenue, beyond three stories to enhance solar access to the street and avoid a 'canyon' effect.
- Mixed Use and Residential Development on East-West Streets: Same as above, except with setbacks particularly on the south side of the street beyond three stories to enhance solar access to the street. Buildings should provide façade modulations that break down the scale of larger developments to recall the underlying original 50' parcel widths.

**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.

- 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.

**Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Institutional Development:** The design of institutional buildings should be distinguished from commercial and residential buildings by location on the site, materials and massing. A building with public uses should exhibit a civic presence through careful attention to its relationship with the public realm. A primary entrance, building form, and architectural elements should be designed and scaled to reflect the public activities contained within.

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

- C-4 **Exterior Finish Materials.** Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

**Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:**

New development should exhibit craftsmanship through the use of durable, attractive materials. Building materials and interesting details found on older buildings on Market Street and the Ballard Avenue Landmark District should be recalled.

- 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-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.

**Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:**

Active, open, interesting building facades are strongly encouraged, particularly on sites adjacent to the park.

- 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.

**Ballard-specific supplemental guidance:**

Service areas, loading docks and refuse should be internal to the development or carefully screened, especially on sites directly adjacent to the park.

- D-7 **Personal Safety and Security.** Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.
- D-9 **Commercial Signage.** Signs should add interest to the street front environment and should be appropriate for the scale and character desired in the area.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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-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.
- 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.

## **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, the following departures were requested:

- 1. Ballard Municipal Center Master Plan Building Height Departure (SMC 23.41.012.B.16.b):**  
The Code requires a maximum building height of 65’ in NC3-65 zones. The Ballard Municipal Center Master Plan includes a provision for additional height for projects that include townhouses facing a park or mid-block connection. The applicant proposes an additional 9’ to the proposed height, to allow for an enclosed rooftop amenity space on the north side of

the site, and a portion of the roof structure on the south side of the site. Townhouse style residential units are proposed on NW 57th St, facing the Ballard Commons Park.

The Board indicated preliminary support for the proposed departure, provided the related guidance is satisfied. At the Recommendation meeting, the applicant should demonstrate how the proposed departure better meets the intent of the Design Review Guidelines and the response to EDG.

- 2. Sight Triangle (SMC 23.54.030.G.1):** The Code requires sight triangles on either side of a driveway that measures 22' wide. The applicant proposes alternative methods such as convex mirrors and signal lights to provide safe visual connections between pedestrians and drivers.

The Board indicated preliminary support for the proposed departure. At the Recommendation meeting, the applicant should demonstrate how the proposed departure better meets the intent of the Design Review Guidelines and the response to EDG.

#### **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.**