



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

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Project Number: 3016464

Address: 2208 8th Avenue

Applicant: Michael Medina of Graphite Design Group, for Clise Properties

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, February 18, 2014

Board Members Present: Gabe Grant (Chair)  
Mathew Albores  
Pragnesh Parikh

Board Members Absent: Murphy McCullough  
Gundala Proksch

DPD Staff Present: Garry Papers, Senior Land Use Planner

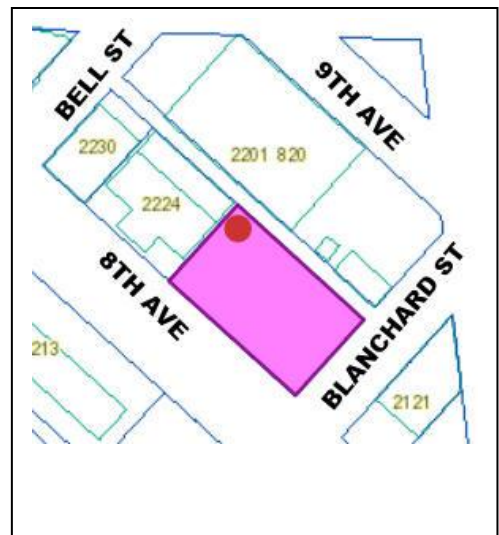
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### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: DMC 240/290-400

Nearby Zones: (North) DMC 240/290-400  
(South) DMC 240/290-400  
(East) DMC 240/290-400  
(West) DMC 340/240-400

Lot Area: 19,426 sq ft, rectangular



**Current Development:** The site is currently a surface parking lot; it slopes about 8 ft from a high point at the mid-block on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, to the low point at the corner of the alley on Blanchard Street.

**Access:** Pedestrian access from the two adjacent streets of Blanchard and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The adjacent through-block alley to the east provides vehicular access to the site, and the existing mixed use building on the adjacent half block.

**Surrounding Development:** The mixed use block of 2201 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue (offices)/ 820 Blanchard (Enso condominiums) is to the east across the alley. A 7 story hotel and one-story commercial building occupy the adjacent lots to the north. A three-story residence and parking lots are across 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the west. A one story commercial structure is across Blanchard Street to the south.

**ECAs:** None.

**Neighborhood Character:** The surrounding neighborhood is rapidly transforming from parking lots and mixed commercial buildings of various scales, to a high density, mixed use district adjacent to the downtown core, including several residential towers and the 3 million sf Amazon campus nearby to the south. The streetcar on Westlake connects this district to South Lake Union and downtown.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed project is a 38 story, 400 ft tall building with approximately 450 residential units, with resident amenity decks and about 6,200 sf of ground level commercial use. No parking is required, but all proposed parking (approximately 450 spaces) would be provided in a 9 level below grade garage. Services, parking and loading access are shown in the code compliant location off the alley. Blanchard is a designated Green Street, and all design options provide the required 15 ft minimum setback above 45 ft along that entire frontage.

<b>EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: February 18, 2014</b>
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## **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](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](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

## PUBLIC COMMENT:

During public comment, the following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Concerned about loss of light and air to residential units across the alley (fully understands private views are not protected), especially at the lower levels on the alley and at the tower 'pinch point' where an existing unit is about 25 ft from proposed tower; requested the proposed tower (any shape) shift west or reduce in size to provide more spacing.
- Concerned about loss of sunlight to the existing plants and usability of the sole Enso amenity deck, located on level six mid-block on the alley; requested more detailed sun/shadow studies and possibly adjusted podium heights to afford sunlight to that shared amenity.
- Stated that loading and parking access off the alley will compound an already congested alley, with time delays and heavy truck loading into the adjacent 2201 office loading docks; and therefore suggested access off 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue [Staff Note: alley access is code required].
- Stated the alley is already congested, that the new residential vehicles will compound that and requested the proposed parking quantity be reduced [Staff Note: there is no code minimum or maximum parking requirement].
- Supported the shape, character and orientation of the preferred elliptical tower, because it is distinctive from the numerous rectilinear buildings in the vicinity.

## 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](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/aboutus/whoware/designreview/designguidelines/default.htm), and: <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/aboutus/whoware/designreview/designguidelines/default.htm>

**All page references below are to the EDG booklet dated February 18, 2014.**

### 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, the Board applauded the complete context analysis and how it informed the massing options, and the Board endorsed the preferred elliptical tower as an appropriate response to the pivotal location in a building context largely rectilinear. The tower also creates a pleasing ensemble with the adjacent 2201/Enso building when viewed from the Denny/Westlake gateway. The physical model was an excellent tool to further Board understanding and support.

- 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, the Board supported the preliminary rooftop design shown on pages A-23/24, including the layered and tapered screens, shared amenity decks, and concealed mechanical. These elements result in a better form than a pure extrusion, and provide residential scale and a distinctive gracious transition to the sky, and might include vegetation and a restrained, sophisticated lighting treatment that utilizes the tall screens.

## B. Architectural Expression

### *Relating to the Neighborhood Context*

- B-1 **Respond to the Neighborhood Context** – Develop an architectural concept and compose the major building elements to reinforce desirable urban features existing in the surrounding neighborhood.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board applauded the applicants for being unusually sensitive to the adjacent residential tower, and for the light and air benefits the elliptical tower affords them. The Board did not suggest further rotating, shifting or reductions in the tower plan, but did advise the fenestration, glass and material composition on the facades facing the neighbors be carefully considered for privacy and measured winter light reflectivity.

The Board did request the east and north portions of the podium be carefully studied and adjusted to allow reasonable sun access to the adjacent amenity deck. In service to this, the Board requested large scale sections through both podiums, and more zoom-in sun/shadow studies of this area, including a full range of times and dates. The Board agreed that while it is unfortunate the Enso amenity deck was located in a low, mid-block location, it cannot completely dictate the forms adjacent.

- B-3 **Reinforce the Positive Urban Form & Architectural Attributes of the Immediate Area** . Consider the predominant attributes of the immediate neighborhood and reinforce

desirable siting patterns, massing arrangements, and streetscape characteristics of nearby development.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board endorsed the ground floor plan shown and how it supports the pedestrian life and streetscape of the vicinity. The podium form and massing is addressed under B-4 below, and other refinements to the ground floor are noted under guidelines C-1 and D-6.**

- 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 supported the stepped podium, the residential lobby location and the slot interlocking it with the tower above. However, the highly visible podium form defining the corner commercial and the two floors above deserves more study. The Board endorsed the recessed corner and visible amenity decks above, but the repeated ellipse shapes and abrupt edge to the alley need further refinement. The lobby frontage should have a distinct form or recess at the ground level, not blurred with a commercial storefront as shown.**

## 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, the Board supported the tall, highly transparent commercial façades shown along 8<sup>th</sup> and Blanchard. To improve pedestrian engagement and flexibility for tenants over the long term life of the building, the Board advised more commercial doors be added along the Blanchard frontage.**

- C-2 Design Facades of Many Scales.** Design and architectural features, fenestration patterns, and material 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, the Board discussed how several precedent images were promising and implied a sophisticated, staggered or woven cladding system. The Board encouraged exploration of a composition and materiality that richly integrates balconies, does not look like an office, and perhaps reflects the spiraling, layered parti (rather than the typical horizontal datums). The tower and podium compositions should represent a transition from skyline scale to street/pedestrian scales, and not assume an identical language throughout.

- C-6 **Develop the Alley Façade.** To increase pedestrian safety, comfort, and interest, develop portions of the alley façade in response to the unique conditions of the site or project.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed the alley facades of the podium (largely made up of small studios) should be carefully designed with sensitivity to the specific windows and living spaces of the adjacent Enso units, and they should include offsets, angles, and other devices to limit eye-to-eye privacy issues across the alley.

## D. Public Amenities

### *Enhancing the Streetscape & Open Space*

- D-2 **Enhance the Building with Landscaping.** Enhance the building and site with substantial landscaping—which includes special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, and site furniture, as well as living plant material.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed the proposed landscape treatment on the two streets (pg A-35) appears promising, but will likely get revised as more refinement of the podium and ground floor proceeds per guidelines B-4 and C-2. The Board applauded the depth and height of commercial spaces shown, and how the corner commercial spills out onto a widened sidewalk with café seating and excellent south sun access.

- D-6 **Design for Personal Safety and Security.** Design the building and site to enhance the real and perceived feeling of personal safety and security in the immediate area.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed how the proposed corner at the alley appears to be opaque and flush to both property lines, and thus restricts visibility between vehicles and pedestrians. To improve sightlines and safety at this busy corner, shift the stair and any shafts inboard, and/or make the corner transparent

glass which improves safety, and affords more visibility into the adjacent retail from Blanchard and Westlake Avenue.

## 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, the Board supported the offset of the proposed parking ramp as far as possible from the existing one across the alley, to reduce vehicle conflicts. They also advised no audible alarms or excess noise generators or fans be located along the alley, adjacent to the existing residential podium.**

### **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

The Board's recommendation on any 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, no departures were identified.

### **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.**