City of Seattle

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

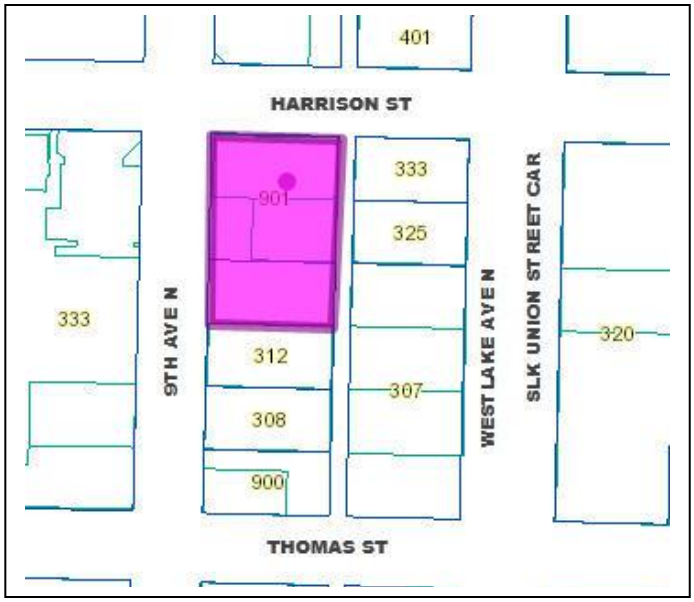
DESIGN REVIEW

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE WEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number:	3016723
Address:	901 Harrison Street
Applicant:	Ankrom Moisan Architects for MacFarlane Partners, Inc.
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, April 02, 2014
Board Members Present:	Boyd Pickrell (Acting Chair) Kate Idziorek Jill Kurfirst Janet Stephenson
Board Members Absent:	Mindy Black
DPD Staff Present:	Shelley Bolser

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone:	SM 160/85-240
Nearby Zones:	(North) SM 160/85-240 (South) SM 160/85-240 (East) SM 160/85-240 (West) SM 160/85-240
Lot Area:	21,600 square feet



Current Development:

The site is located on the southeast corner of Harrison St and 9th Avenue N in the South Lake Union neighborhood. An alley borders the east edge of the site. Existing development on site includes an early 20th century commercial structure and a surface parking lot. The northern portion of the structure is currently in use as City Hardware, a retail store.

The existing structure has been nominated for historic landmark status and is currently in review with the Landmarks Preservation Board. If the building is designated as a historic landmark, a Certificate of Approval from the Landmarks Preservation Board will be required to modify or demolish the structure.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The immediate vicinity includes a mix of development styles and vintages. The area is going through rapid redevelopment, with older 1-2 story commercial structures and surface parking lots being redeveloped to taller office and residential development. Most of the residential development is located one block to the west (along 8th Ave N) and several blocks to the east, east of Fairview Ave N. Most of the surrounding sites are being redeveloped for office structures. Development is currently under construction across the street to the north and west of the site, as well as several other sites within blocks of the subject property. Several more sites are proposed for development within a few blocks of the subject property.

9th Ave N is a minor arterial with transit routes and is designated as a future bicycle route, connecting the west side of Lake Union to the downtown core. Harrison Street is noted as a "Heart Location" in the South Lake Union Design Guidelines and is designated a Class 2 Pedestrian Street in the Land Use Code. The site is located within the Westlake area of the South Lake Union Design Guidelines.

Access:

Existing vehicular access to the site is via the alley.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed development is a 25-story residential building containing 320 units above 2,100 square feet of retail. Parking for 190 vehicles is proposed below grade, to be accessed from the alley. The existing structure would be demolished.

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The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3016723) 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

Board Acting Chair Boyd Pickrell disclosed that he works for the firm that prepared the historic landmark nomination report for the existing building on site. He noted that his firm is not involved in the design of the proposed development and he feels he can review the proposed design without conflict or bias.

The applicants presented additional massing options (2a and 2b) with the tower at the south end of the site and a podium that steps back from the north edge of the site. Massing Option 2a could allow the existing building to be incorporated into the new development, should it become a designated historic landmark. The applicant noted that if the building is designated as a historic landmark, the windows' tall sill height above the sidewalk elevation will be challenging for retail.

The applicant described Massing Option (2b) that places the tower at the south edge of the site, but isn't arranged to specifically accommodate the existing building.

The preferred podium massing responds to the existing power lines and required upper level setbacks. The street level design intent is to respond to the rapidly changing context of new development in the South Lake Union area, and specifically 9th Ave N. The podium height corresponds to the 45' podium of the development across the street to the west (currently under construction). The 9th Ave N street level façade is set back 8' to provide a buffer for the live-work units at street level, and the flexibility for these spaces to function as future commercial uses.

The preferred option includes a tower that is 20' narrower than the other options, with the longer façade facing 9th Ave N and the narrower façade facing Harrison St. The intent of this tower shape is to provide a buffer from the adjacent buildings to the east and west and minimize the width of the shadow cast on the plaza to the north across Harrison Street (under construction). The narrower tower shape also allows increased natural daylighting in the tower, which is consistent with LEED sustainability principles.

The intent of the landscape plan is to provide a curb bulb at the intersection, maximize green space at grade, and use the stepped upper levels for landscaped terraces and open space that relates to street-level landscaping and sidewalk grade.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following public comments were offered at the meeting:

- The square building has less shadow impacts than the preferred tower massing.
- The departure to place the mechanical at the northwest corner of the tower further increases the shadow impacts, and further increases the appearance of height, which is already out of scale with nearby neighboring development.
- The proposed treatment of the live-work edge may not be sufficient to buffer the residential aspect of this use from the street level activity. The Veer Lofts building also has setbacks but still has mostly closed blinds at the street level. A buffer should be provided.
- Supported the proposed residential use in the neighborhood.
- There's a streetscape plan for 9th Ave N. The plan isn't adopted, but it indicates the neighborhood's intent for the design of this area and can provide helpful context.
- The north-south orientation of the narrow tower is a good contextual response to the building across the alley (which is also proposed as residential).
- Departure #3 may not be something that's departable through design review.
- The alley façade should be treated as another primary façade. The alley should be activated, since the neighborhood alleys will become more active pedestrian areas.
- Retail should be provided on 9th Ave N, rather than live-work. Live-work will more likely be residential and not activate the streetscape.
- Supported the proposed departures.
- The rooftop element and/or tower could be placed further to the south without much impact to the sun on the outdoor areas proposed at the roof.

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 2, 2014

1. **Architectural Concept. The Board supported the preferred massing option for the slender tower and the street level design. The Board recommended that the tower be further modulated. The tower and podium design should be integrated.**
    a. The Board noted that the slender tower relates better to the context of the building to the north, creates a better overall building proportion, and provides an appropriate response to natural daylighting and managing solar heat gain. (CS1.B.3, CS2.II.ii)

b. The tower should be further modulated on the north and west facades to enhance the articulation and the slender appearance of the tower. The Board suggested that approximately 10' deep modulation would meet this guidance, rather than the proposed 2' to 3' modulation, in order to relate to the overall scale and enhance the tower concept. The tower will be taller than surrounding buildings and very visible in the skyline. (CS2.A.2, CS2.II.ii, DC1.A)
c. The design of the podium and tower design should be integrated, and should respond to the context of nearby developments. The Board specified that while there are no other similar tower heights proposed nearby, there are developments with podium and upper building compositions. The proposed design should respond to the context of nearby transitions between podium and upper level building areas. (DC1.B, DC1.D)
d. The applicant should consider the possibility of incorporating the existing building façade into the proposed development, even if the Landmarks Board review doesn't result in a historic landmark designation. The overall design should result in a cohesive design expression. (CS3.B.2, CS3.II.ii and iv)
    i. If the building is not landmarked, the Board noted that the façade could be modified to be made more conducive to retail uses.

2. Street Level Design. The Board encouraged activation of the street frontage.

a. The Board encouraged the applicant to strongly consider placing retail on 9th Ave N, which will provide more immediate street level transparency and activity than live-work uses. (CS2.B.2, PL2.I)
b. The street level design should respond to the developing context at the intersection and the Heart Location designation of Harrison St. This corner should enhance the character of the "outdoor room" of the street frontage at that intersection. (CS2.B.3, CS2.C, CS2.I.iv, PL1.A.1)
c. The Board supported the proposed curb bulb and street furniture to enhance the pedestrian experience. (PL1.III)
d. The Board supported varying the design of the overhead weather protection at the street frontage, and noted that the design should differentiate this street frontage from the development across 9th Ave N. (PL2.C)
e. The Board also supported the conceptual sketches indicating the design intent for the street level entries, street facing facades, landscaping, and hardscape. (PL3.A.1 and 4)
    i. The Board noted that if live-work continues to be proposed at 9th Ave N., the entries should be designed in response to the residential entries neighborhood Design Guideline (PL3.III)
f. The 9th Ave N. curb bulb and street level treatment should be designed to respond to the intended bicycle route along 9th Ave N. and the neighborhood streetscape plan for 9th Ave N.

3. Alley. Given the proposed activation of the alley and connection to the pedestrian amenities across the alley, the alley frontage should be designed to enhance the design intent.

a. Lighting should enhance pedestrian safety, especially at the alley. (PL1.I.iii)

b. The Board noted that since the north end of the alley will include pedestrian activity, the location of services near the southeast corner of the site is an appropriate response to the context and the proposed design. (DC1.C.4)
c. The alley façade should be designed to be consistent with the other three facades of the building, given the pedestrian activity, visibility of the façade, and the proposed residential use across the alley. (DC2.B.1)

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-B Sunlight and Natural Ventilation

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.

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

CS2-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces

CS2-B-2. Connection to the Street: Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and public realm.

CS2-B-3. Character of Open Space: Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces.

CS2-C Relationship to the Block

CS2-C-1. Corner Sites: Corner sites can serve as gateways or focal points; both require careful detailing at the first three floors due to their high visibility from two or more streets and long distances.

South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:

CS2-I Responding to Site Characteristics

CS2-I-iv. Heart Locations: Several areas have been identified as "heart locations." Heart locations serve as the perceived center of commercial and social activity within the neighborhood. These locations provide anchors for the community as they have identity and give form to the neighborhood. Development at heart locations should enhance their central character through appropriate site planning and architecture. These sites have a high priority for improvements to the public realm. A new building's primary entry

and facade should respond to the heart location. Special street treatments are likely to occur and buildings will need to respond to these centers of commercial and social activity. Amenities to consider are: pedestrian lighting, public art, special paving, landscaping, additional public open space provided by curb bulbs and entry plazas. See full guidelines for Heart Locations

CS2-II Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility

CS2-II-ii. Upper-level Setbacks: 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.

South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:

CS3-II Architectural Context

CS3-II-ii. Preservation: Re-use and preserve important buildings and landmarks when possible.

CS3-II-iv. Historic Aesthetic: 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.

PUBLIC LIFE

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

PL1-A Network of Open Spaces

PL1-A-1. Enhancing Open Space: Design the building and open spaces to positively contribute to a broader network of open spaces throughout the neighborhood.

South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:

PL1-I Human Activity

PL1-I-iii. Lighting: Design for a network of safe and well-lit connections to encourage human activity and link existing high activity areas.

PL1-III Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances

PL1-III-i. Public Realm Amenity: 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:

a. curb bulbs adjacent to active retail spaces where they are not interfering with primary corridors that are designated for high levels of traffic flow;
b. pedestrian-oriented street lighting;
c. street furniture.

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

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.

South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:

PL2-I Streetscape Compatibility

PL2-I-i. Street Level Uses: 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.

PL1-I-ii. Streetscape Amenities: Provide pedestrian-friendly streetscape amenities

a. tree grates;
b. benches;
c. lighting.

PL1-I-iii. Sidewalk Retail: 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).

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-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.

South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:

PL3-III Transition Between Residence and Street

PL3-III-i. Residential Entries: 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.

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-C Parking and Service Uses

DC1-C-1. Below-Grade Parking: Locate parking below grade wherever possible. Where a surface parking lot is the only alternative, locate the parking in rear or side yards, or on lower or less visible portions of the site.

DC1-C-2. Visual Impacts: Reduce the visual impacts of parking lots, parking structures, entrances, and related signs and equipment as much as possible.

DC1-C-3. Multiple Uses: Design parking areas to serve multiple uses such as children's play space, outdoor gathering areas, sports courts, woonerf, or common space in multifamily projects.

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-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.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

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

1. **Rooftop Features (SMC 23.48.010.H.7.b):** The Code requires that all rooftop features be located at least 10' from the roof edge. The applicant proposes to locate portions of the penthouse at the north and west roof edges, in order to visually integrate the mechanical penthouse with the building façade, and allow for more contiguous roof deck area.

   The Board indicated potential support for the departure, given the support for the preferred alternative and the emphasis of the slender modulated tower form. 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. **Street Level Development Standards (SMC 23.48.014.E.2):** The Code requires that street level uses shall have a minimum floor to floor height of 13' and a minimum depth of 30'. The applicant proposes some live-work units would have a 12' floor to floor height at the lowest point, in response to sidewalk grade.

   The Board indicated they were not inclined to support the proposed departure, unless the applicant can demonstrate how the design presents a space that is more conducive to flexible future commercial uses and better meets the intent of the Design Review Guidelines.

3. **Street Level Development Standards (SMC 23.48.014.E.2):** The Code requires that street level street facing facades shall have a maximum setback of 12'. The applicant proposes to set back the northwest corner 29' from the west property line and 35' from the north property line, in order to provide a larger entry plaza and room for pedestrian activity near the corner.

   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.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application.