



FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE WEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3017232

Address: 1120 Denny Way

Applicant: Chris Dikeakos Architects for Evan Lewis of Onni Development

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Board Members Present: Boyd Pickrell, Chair
Christine Harrington
Homero Nishiwaki
Janet Stephenson

Board Members Absent: Kate Idziorek (recused)

SDCI Staff Present: Shelley Bolser

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Seattle Mixed (SM 240/125-400)

Nearby Zones: (North) SM 160/85-240
(South) DMC-240/125-400
(East) SM/R
(West) SM 240/125-400

Lot Area: 109,773 square feet



Current Development:

The lot is developed with a landscaped open space at the northeast corner with several mature trees, surface parking lots, and a one-story commercial building at the southwest corner of the block.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The site is located on the south edge of the South Lake Union neighborhood, transitioning to Denny Triangle to the south. One and two-story older commercial buildings are located to the south.

The Seattle Times offices and an older 1-story restaurant building are located across the street to the west. Two new developments are proposed on the block to the west. A recently completed office building is located to the northwest. John Street terminates on the block to the west, and continues after the steep transition in grade further to the west. The change in grade provides views of the Space Needle along John Street to the west. To the east is the existing Mirabella condominium development.

The block to the north is being reviewed under MUP 3015693 and was reviewed at EDG with the subject property.

The area is undergoing rapid reconstruction and many of the nearby structures have been built in the last 10 years, are under construction, or are in the permitting process for new construction. Several historic landmarks are located in the area, and new construction is often integrated with the historic landmark structure. Most of the areas to the north and west are dominated by office uses. The blocks east of Fairview Ave N include several multi-family residential developments and Cascade Park. Several new towers are proposed to the west.

The adjacent streets include two busy arterials with frequent transit service (Denny Way and Fairview Ave N), and two non-arterials with lower traffic volumes (John Street and Boren Ave N).

Access:

Existing access to the site is via several curb cuts on the street frontages. The site is not adjacent to an alley. The proposed access to the below grade garage is from Boren Ave N.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The site is proposed for two 41-story towers with 1,179 residential units, 28,189 sq. ft. of retail, and parking for 1,461 vehicles below grade. The existing surface parking would be demolished and the privately owned open space with Exceptional Trees at the northeast corner of this block would be preserved ("Seattle Times Park").

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3015693 and 3017232) 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 SDCI:

Mailing Public Resource Center

Address: 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The applicant described the existing landscaped privately owned open space at the northeast corner of the south block, referred to as the “Seattle Times Park,” although it is not owned or maintained by the Seattle Parks Department. The applicant explained that preserving this open space would reduce the development potential on the south block. SDCI and City Council are considering a Land Use Code text amendment that would allow additional density on the north block, which may make it possible to preserve the existing open space on the south block.

The five options presented included various mid-block connection locations and various tower locations. The first option (1) included north-south mid-block connections, which would require a departure for the orientation of the connection, and stairs would be needed to address the mid-block grade change on the north block. The second option (2) included east-west mid-block connections, with towers located at the southwest and northeast corners of the site. This option would result in a tower directly across the street from the historic landmark.

The third and preferred option (3A) included east-west mid-block connections with another connection between this path and John Street. Option 3A showed John Street as a pedestrian plaza and closed to vehicles, with garage access from Fairview Ave N. Towers were shown at the northwest and southeast corners of each block, which could result in additional shadows to John Street. The applicant noted that option 3A orients one of the retail spaces to face John Street, the mid-block connection, and the internal courtyard on the south site. The intent of this frontage is to activate the mid-block connection and the courtyard.

The fourth option (3B) was similar to option 3A, but included parking access at Boren Ave N, with John St left open to vehicular traffic.

The fifth option (4) was shown with the landscaped open space and Exceptional Trees preserved on the south block. The mid-block connections were similar to options 3A and 3B, but with additional pedestrian paths through the south block open space. The towers were shown on the

northwest and southeast corners of each block. The applicant noted that option 4 includes usable open space and exceptional trees, but is not the applicant's preferred option since it would require Land Use Code text amendments to achieve a comparable amount of density as option 3A.

The applicant clarified that the street frontage in all the options includes street level townhouses on Boren Ave N, Thomas St, and Fairview Ave N; retail on John Street; and a combination of retail and residential amenity space on Denny Way. Services and refuse collection would be located within the below-grade garage.

The applicant noted that the intent of the landscape plan is to provide usable open space with play areas, urban agriculture and other spaces for residential use on the podium levels. The street level and interior courtyard spaces would be designed to complement the public uses at the edges of the site and at the mid-block connections.

The applicant would like to develop John St as a public pedestrian space with seating, wi-fi hotspots, opportunities for food trucks, and special paving. Retail would front on John Street in order to activate the pedestrian street.

The applicant clarified that the mid-block connections would be covered by building at the edges of the sites and open to the sky in the center of the sites. These breezeways would be at least 2 stories tall and 25' wide, in order to maximize natural light and a welcoming public appearance. The applicant noted that these connections would be closed after hours, perhaps around 10-11pm.

The residential units would be set back 6-8' from the property lines on the north block to accommodate the grade change from sidewalk to stoop and front door. The interior units facing the courtyard would have approximately a 10' deep "yard" separating the units from the adjacent courtyard.

The proposed massing includes setbacks at the corners of the sites, in response to the Gateway location of the site described in the South Lake Union Design Guidelines, and the different condition of each street frontage. The southwest corner would include a 10'x50' plaza, the northeast corner would include a 15'x40' plaza, and the southeast corner would include a 25'x25' plaza. The John Street frontage would be designed without setbacks, but with wider sidewalks for seating and pedestrian use.

SDCI staff noted that while some trees on the south site are Exceptional, the trees may be removed in Seattle Mixed zones, per SMC 25.11. Design review can consider how the trees relate to the Design Review Guidelines, but alternate designs to retain the trees will not be required to be considered through design review in order to meet the requirements of SMC 25.11.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Comments offered at the EDG meeting included the following:

- The Exceptional Trees should be retained since they are critical for clean air, oxygen, quality of life, and greenhouse gas reduction. The Seattle Times ‘park’ is the largest tree canopy in the South Lake Union neighborhood and an important resource that should be saved.
- Another potential massing option was shown as a part of the public comment, similar to Option 4, with the open space retained on the south block.
- The existing open space provides habitat, pervious surface, and tree canopy with exceptional and rare trees.
- The public life, context, and site planning Design Guidelines are all a high priority for this site.
- Supported the Vancouver-style residential tower and podium development, but the applicant’s goal of LEED Gold conflicts with the proposed removal of the park and trees.
- The reduction in development would be approximately 4% of the proposed development.
- The open space requirements should be met on the private property and not in the public right of way. Saving the ‘park’ can help to meet the open space requirements.
- Historic Seattle representative noted that The Seattle Times ‘park’ is historically significant and should be retained along with the designated historic landmark.
- The proposed mid-block connections and courtyards won’t be as truly accessible to the public as the existing ‘park.’
- Urban Forestry Commission noted that the City’s goals for tree canopy will not be met if large canopy trees such as these are removed, or replaced with similar canopy trees and provided with room for those trees to grow. The City Codes should be creative and make it possible for projects to meet the housing goals along with retaining Exceptional Trees.
- The Comprehensive Plan includes policies to retain Exceptional Trees through design review.
- City Council passed a resolution for Seattle Times ‘park’ to be preserved as public open space.
- SEPA requires mitigation of projects to retain Exceptional Trees.
- Other nearby developments were required to consider Exceptional Trees through design review, and those sites were in the same Seattle Mixed zone.
- The zoning required 45% of the open space to be open to the sky and facing the street. The preferred option of narrow open space access isn’t meeting the intent of this requirement.
- The access to the central public open space is covered for more than 50% and doesn’t have retail facing the mid-block connections or interior courtyards. The lack of retail and the covered openings will discourage public use and the area will be used only as private open space.
- The ‘park’ helps to regulate local climate, creates a sense of place within the South Lake Union neighborhood, an opportunity for connection with nature, and nearby residents support retaining this space.
- A historic time capsule is enclosed under the concrete patio in the park, to be opened in 2089.
- The Design Guideline to “Use natural systems and features of a site and its surroundings” should be the starting point for redesign of this proposal.

- Supported Option 4 with retention of the ‘park.’
- The park’s permeable surface is critical to water infiltration, tree health, and is rare in this area.
- Supported parking access off Boren, not Fairview Ave N.
- The applicant noted that option 3A minimizes shadows to the historic landmark, but option 4 also minimizes shadows to the historic landmark.
- Additional parking could be excavated under the setbacks within private property, making it possible to save the ‘park’ and minimize impacts to parking garage areas.
- Most of the planned amenities are inaccessible to the public.
- The passageways should not be covered, since it makes the space appear private rather than public.
- The proposed development will reduce natural light, views from nearby private properties, and affect market values.
- The south block towers should be put on the west side near Boren Ave N instead of Fairview Ave N.
- The trees in the park absorb 1 ton of CO2 per year, and removing them will add 2 tons of CO2.
- The proposal should include at least 30% of the floor area as housing affordable at the workforce income level.

SECOND EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE July 16, 2014

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3015693 and 3017232) at this website:
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DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Board member Janet Stephenson noted that the company she works for has an interest in potentially providing consulting engineering services to the development, but her company does not have a formal engagement with the applicant at this time. Ms. Stephenson noted that she has no personal financial interest or professional stake in the development, and can therefore provide an objective perspective to this proposed development.

SDCI staff explained that since the last EDG meeting, the City is considering a Land Use Code text amendment that will allow additional tower height on the north block, provided that the Seattle

Times private park and Exceptional Trees are retained on the south block. The text amendment will likely be considered by City Council in November 2014. SDCI staff summarized the design-related issues of the text amendment, including:

- Provisions for a north tower up to 280' and a south tower up to 320' on the north block;
- Maximum 10,500 square foot floor plate for the additional height on the two north block towers;
- Requirement for the north block to meet Land Use Code open space requirements, even with retention of the Seattle Times private park on the south block;
- The Seattle Times private park would need to be open to the public in the same manner as Seattle City Public Parks' operating hours and requirements; and
- Some minor changes to the smaller ornamental trees and pedestrian paths in the Seattle Times private park could be made, subject to approval by the SDCI and Seattle Parks Department Directors.

The applicant explained that since the previous EDG meeting, the preferred option now includes retention of all Exceptional Trees, limiting excavation to the edge of the Exceptional Tree driplines, retention of most non-Exceptional trees, retention of the fountain, and retention or relocation of the time capsule. Two trees are proposed for removal. These trees are not exceptional and are near the south edge, in the shade of the existing Exceptional Trees.

The intent for the park design is to honor the existing abstract organic forms, while updating the design. Additional paved and seating areas are proposed, to encourage use of the area. The applicant noted that the time capsule may be retained in place, or relocated to a better spot in the park. The existing plaque noting that the park is for Seattle Times employees use only may be reused in a manner that references the original park intent, while making it clear that the park is now for general public use.

A woonerf-style street is proposed for the John Street public right of way, with the intent of emphasizing pedestrian use over automobile use, but still allowing for two way vehicular travel. A 20' wide raised curving roadway for two-way traffic, public seating, bollards, special paving patterns leading to the sidewalks and mid-block connections, and other pedestrian amenities are proposed for this street. Loading/parking areas would be located between the pedestrian and vehicle areas, with the intent of providing spaces for food trucks. Rain gardens are also anticipated along John Street.

The historic landmark (Seattle Times building) is proposed for retail uses at the ground floor with residential use at the second story and a rooftop deck above. The occupiable deck area would be set back from the building edges, with green roof between the deck and the building edge. The north block interior courtyard would be located adjacent to 'front yards' for the ground level residences. The applicant noted that these 'front yards' would be approximately 10' deep, similar to the street fronting units.

In addition to the retail in the Seattle Times building, additional retail is proposed in concentrated areas, in response to the first EDG direction. Retail is proposed along both sides of John St, at the south edge of the Seattle Times private park, and wrapping around onto Denny Way. The applicant provided a study that showed it would be possible to provide a grocery sized

retail space on Denny Way and loading areas on the south block, but the preferred option includes retail at the southeast and southwest corners, with residential amenity space along the rest of the Denny Way frontage.

In response to the first EDG direction, the applicant revised the design of the mid-block connections. The south block includes connections open to the sky on the south and west edges of the private park, with building above the connection at Boren Ave. The north block includes building above the connections at Boren Ave and Fairview Ave, and a narrow bridge over the connection to John St. The design intent is to create large openings at the street frontage where building structure is located above the mid-block connections. The street frontage openings are 30' wide at the entry point, 25' wide on average, the building area above the connection is set back 10' from the building façade on either side, the passageway would be clad in high quality materials to invite use, and paving patterns would be used to encourage connection from the sidewalks.

The street level residential units are proposed with a 5' building overhang above the second floor, 7' setbacks from the property line, landscape planters to buffer the street level residential units from the sidewalk areas, latched gates at the sidewalk, and raised stoops.

New massing options included Options 4+, 5A, 5B, and 5C. The applicant explained that these options were developed in response to the first EDG direction, direction from Seattle Department of Transportation, Department of Neighborhoods related to the historic landmark, and the proposed Land Use Code text amendment.

The applicant noted that the proposed development went before the Department of Neighborhoods Architectural Review Committee (ARC) for feedback on the design response to the historic landmark building (Seattle Times original building). The ARC requested that the other two bays on the south façade be maintained, since they are virtually indistinguishable from the historic landmark portion of the structure. The ARC also requested that the Seattle Times Production Building façade be maintained as part of the design. The applicant noted that they are proposing to retain the additional two bays on the south edge, but they prefer not to retain the Production Building façade, since the elevations of the window sills would result in difficult design connections to the sidewalk level. The Seattle Times Production Building and the other buildings on the north block will be nominated for historic landmark designation by the applicant. If designated, modification of the designated portion of the structure(s) would require approval by the Landmarks Preservation Board.

Massing Option 4+ included retaining the private park, designing John St for 2-way traffic, proposed parking entries from Boren Ave N on both blocks, departures for open space, rooftop features, and a screen wall at the tower roofs. This option showed residential amenity space on Denny with retail on the southeast and southwest corners of the south block.

Option 5A included the possibility of retaining the Seattle Times Production Building façade, which is not a designated historic landmark, and is located along Fairview Ave N. Mid-block connections to the Fairview Ave N sidewalk may require modification of the Seattle Times Production building façade. Option 5A therefore showed an L-shaped mid-block connection on

the north lot, connecting John Street to Boren Ave N. This option avoided modification of the Seattle Times Production Building façade.

Option 5B included preservation of the same areas as 5A, with the addition of a mid-block connection to the east. This option would require modification of the Seattle Times Production Building façade, which may not be approved if the Seattle Times Production Building is designated as a historic landmark.

Option 5C includes preservation of these same areas, with a diagonal mid-block connection to the northeast on the north block. This mid-block connection orientation would not require modification of the Seattle Times Production Building façade. Option 5C would relate better to the Troy block mid-block entry at the southeast corner of that site, across Thomas St.

The applicant also presented alternative tower design options for the site. One option included a rounded 'curled newspaper' as a foil to the historic landmark building. Other tower options includes a rectilinear expression, an extrusion of the Art Deco form, and an eroded version of the 'curled newspaper.' These various tower forms could be varied between the north and south blocks, to avoid a campus appearance and vary the tower forms in the two blocks.

An option for tower orientation on the south block included the southeast tower with the narrow side of the tower facing Fairview and Denny. The shadow studies indicated minimal difference between the two tower orientations.

The landscape plan included retention of all street trees and addition of street trees where there are existing gaps. Within the private park, all Exceptional trees would be retained, most of the other trees would be retained, and 16 trees would be added. The lighting plan would focus on evening safety and emphasize the plantings.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Comments offered at the 2nd EDG meeting included the following:

- Appreciated the proposed preservation of the time capsule and the use of the existing "Seattle Times employees only" sign in a way that shows that the park is open to the public.
- Appreciated the preservation of the Seattle Times private park, and the continued neighborhood amenity.
- Look to the recently completed Bell Street park/woonerf as an example for how to design John Street.
- The Land Use Code includes open space requirements for areas open to the sky, adjacent to the street, with minimum dimensions. The proposed design should meet that requirement.
- The passageways to the center of the blocks should be open to the sky. The additional height is compensation for the preservation of the private park. The open space areas should meet the Land Use Code requirements, in addition to the retention of the private park.

- The colonnades facing the south and west edges of the private park are a problem because they will be dark. These areas should be open to the sky.
- The south tower on the south block should be oriented with the narrow dimension facing Fairview Ave N. While the shadows aren't appreciably different, the visual impact would be lessened to the neighbors across Fairview.
- The proposed departure for rooftop screening isn't warranted and doesn't enhance the design expression.
- The retail spaces should be carefully designed and marketed to ensure they are leased and not vacant.
- Questioned the project phasing.
 - The applicant responded that they may phase the construction permits, but development team hasn't yet decided whether to phase, or how it might be phased.
- Questioned the tower separation and size.
 - The applicant clarified the towers as approximately 110' wide with approximately 180' spacing.
- The podium should be lowered and designed to preserve views from the east across the site.
- Questioned the size of the street trees on Fairview.
 - The applicant clarified that the proposed new street trees on Fairview Ave N would be approximately 4" diameter caliper at planting (about 20-25' tall at the time of planting).

INITIAL RECOMMENDATION February 3, 2016
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DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The applicant explained how the proposal and design have changed, in response to direction from the second EDG meeting. The applicant noted that Seattle Department of Transportation has initiated review of the proposed John Street improvements, and indicated that a 20' wide roadway will be acceptable.

The west mid-block connection was shown with an art wall and integrated lighting to provide a sense of welcoming public spaces. The art wall was described as including colored and fritted glass in patterns and images to recognize the history of the site. The applicant explained that the north façade of the building adjacent to the mid-block connection is set back at the upper levels, to allow natural light into the mid-block connection.

Changes to the buildings included double height retail spaces, and larger areas of retail frontage than shown at EDG. Interlocking frame elements were used to express the podiums.

The towers included vertical and horizontal solar shade structures. The design concept referred to the newspaper printing press tables, intending to convey the angle of the tables in the tower forms. The podium concrete frames were intended to refer to the grid forms of letter press storage in the printing press tables. The applicant explained that the towers were designed to present different expressions, through the use of fritted glass, mullions, horizontal louvers, balconies, and rooftop forms.

Project goals included LEED Gold certification when the building is complete. Strategies that relate to design review included protection of mature trees, maximizing natural light in the building through features such as a solarium, louvers to minimize unwanted solar heat gain, bioretention planters and rain gardens for stormwater management, urban agriculture for residents, and provision of bike storage and repair facilities.

The proposed driveway entrance at Boren Ave N included glass guardrails with low landscaping, to provide clear sight lines.

The open space and landscaping design included a podium rooftop agricultural area at the west edge of the site, retention of nearly all the trees and open space at the northeast corner of the site, a landscape buffer between the curb and sidewalk at Denny Way, and a public plaza at the southeast corner of the site. John Street was shown with a pedestrian focused woonerf design.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Comments offered at the Initial Recommendation meeting included the following:

- Advocated for the proposal to include family sized apartments, outdoor play areas, overall design for child safety, and indoor common space suitable for children. This is one of the largest developments and should be designed to include families in South Lake Union;
- Supported preserving the Seattle Times private park;
- Advocated for retaining the Atlas cedar in the northeast corner of the park; some comments indicated it may be part of a Grove in which all trees are Exceptional;
- Appreciated the proposed tree protection;
- The time capsule in the private park should be preserved and should be shown on all drawings;
- Appreciated the proposed improvements to John Street;

- The orientation of the tower on the southeast corner isn't consistent with the respect for adjacent sites DR guideline. The design is long north-south and short east-west, which has maximum impact on Mirabella residents across the street. Per Guideline CS2-D.5, the tower orientation should be rotated so the short façade is north-south and minimizes impacts to nearby residences;
- Concerned that the proposal doesn't meet Land Use Code open space requirements;
- The 125' high southwest corner is much larger than the 65' height shown at EDG. This change doesn't relate to the overall building massing, and should be reviewed in the same way the massing was reviewed at EDG;
- Concerned that the concrete frame elements would be sufficiently finished to weather well over the decades;
 - The applicant clarified that it's painted concrete and will be easy to maintain.
- SDCI staff provided the Board with a memo and verbal summary of design related comments that were received between the 2nd EDG meeting and the Recommendation meeting:
 - Supported the proposed 'private park' as a way to retain the existing publicly used open space and mature trees;
 - Concerned about the increased podium height since the 2nd EDG meeting;
 - Supported the proposed improvements to John Street;
 - Supported the proposed tower placement;
 - Additional street trees should be retained;
 - Space for pedestrians and cyclists should be provided at Denny Way;
 - Any residential units at street level should be set back at least 15';
 - Street level setbacks should be provided and should include landscaped open space;
 - Any proposed colonnades should be removed for better natural light, to provide room for the Exceptional Trees on site, and allow room for decks and patios; and
 - Upper level setbacks should be provided adjacent to the exceptional trees and to provide better light to the mid-block connections.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION May 18, 2016
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DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The applicant described the design intent of a rolled newspaper for the center of the towers, although the form has evolved to be rectilinear since the initial concept. The tower cores are framed by a grid that is intended to reference the layout of newspaper columns. The towers are primarily grayscale to reflect the idea of newsprint. The glossy colorful materials on the podia are in reference to the colorful comics section and the advertisement inserts in newspapers.

Changes to the design since the Initial Recommendation meeting include evolution of the northwest tower shape and materials, changes to the design of the southwest 125' tall portion of the building, a setback between the northwest tower and the building to the south, designs for pedestrian comfort and safety around the garage entry, variation in the street level design around the base of the buildings, and modification of the landscaping and pavers.

The applicant noted that the northwest tower now includes an angled butterfly shape at the top of the tower core, with concrete framing on the sides of the core. The butterfly shape of the tower top reflects the same angle as the base of the tower, when it's viewed in plan.

The 125' tall building at the southwest corner of the site is designed with a darker color palette and high quality "industrial" materials to contrast with the lighter glassy towers and reference the historic printing uses. The materials in this area of the building include steel letters mounted on the façade that include historical headlines from 1930 to current day, to reflect the history of the Seattle Times newspaper at this site. The applicant noted that a librarian will curate and choose which headlines to use. In response to Board questions, the applicant agreed that it would be possible to add dates to the headlines to clarify the intended reference of this design.

This area of the building was also revised to simplify the design and frame the 125' tall portion of the building with black brick. An orange glass corner element is slightly rotated, with tapered columns below. The applicant explained that these strategies are intended to further emphasize the corner of Denny Way and Boren Ave N.

The garage entry was modified in response to Initial Recommendations, including a larger setback between tower and podium above the garage entry, skylights above the car ramp for natural lighting and better visibility, leveling of the upper ramp for better visibility, and an extended colorful glass wall between the mid-block connection and the driveway. The applicant clarified that the colorful glass wall would include fritted glass images reflecting similar historic moments as the newspaper headlines.

The applicant noted the efforts to visually tie the tower and base of the buildings, including mullions that continue through the soffits and align with the feature lighting in the mid-block connection and the storefront mullions, a variety of canopy designs to emphasize residential uses and varied commercial uses, and metal panel at the soffits of the brick frames.

The landscape plan was modified to provide a unified paving plan across the site. The paving plan would use a combination of textured and smooth pavers in all areas, with lighter pavers in areas of public use and darker pavers in areas of private use. A combination of light and dark

pavers with scoring patterns would be used to create visual connections across the John St woonerf. Special pavers with lettering would be used to emphasize the historic printing press uses at the site in some areas. A public art feature at the southwest corner would be designed by an artist and would be based on the notion of a relic of the printing presses.

The John St woonerf is in review with Seattle Department of Transportation, and the design has progressed according to direction from that department. A raised roadway places the walkways flush with the driving surface for a curbless street.

The “Seattle Times park” includes retention of trees, most of the trees along street frontages. The Atlas cedar at the northeast corner of the site is a large tree but it has been poorly maintained and the pruning needed to open it for sight lines would result in a large loss of tree canopy, so the arborist hired by the applicant recommended removal of this tree. A large specimen deciduous tree would be planted in its place. The design of the ‘park’ also includes an added pedestrian connection between the southwest corner and the mid-block connection.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Comments offered at the Initial Recommendation meeting included the following:

- Wondered about the proposed location of the colorful glass material on the materials and colors board.
 - The applicant clarified this is only proposed at the mid-block connection and at the orange southwest corner element.
- Concerned that the Mirabella residents to the east won’t be able to look through the site to the west, due to the height of the southwest portion of the building and the lower height of the Mirabella.
- Concerned about the departure to exceed the maximum proposed rooftop coverage. Asserted that granting this departure increases the visual height of the tower.
- Concerned with the additional height of the southwest portion of the building since the EDG meetings. The building to the west is lower in height and will likely be there for a long time. The southwest portion of the building should be designed for a more gradual transition in scale to the west.
- Concerned about the proposed ramp slope of the driveway.
- Appreciated the clearance height of the proposed mid-block connection.
- Appreciated the tree retention and the retention of the “Seattle Times park.”
- Noted that the intent of providing headlines on the building might not be clear and could be confused for statements referring to other things.
- Would like to see the corner of Boren and Denny be designed to discourage pedestrians from attempting to cross Denny, since there is no crosswalk at that location.
- SDCI staff also provided the Board with a memo and verbal summary of design related comments that were received between the Initial and Second Recommendation meetings:
 - Concerned about shadows on the landscaped open space and existing trees at the northeast corner;
 - Concerned about the mass of the 125’ tall southwest portion of the building; and
 - Concerned about sufficient public open space on site.

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.

FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE April 30, 2014

At the time of the First EDG meeting, the Board focused on providing preliminary guidance and postponed identifying the priority Design Guidelines to the Second EDG meeting. Applicable Design Guidelines are therefore identified in the Second EDG meeting guidance statements.

- 1. Circulation and Streetscape Character.** John Street should remain open to pedestrians and vehicles; parking access should be from Boren Ave N, and the uses should be arranged to respond to the different character of each street frontage.
 - a. John Street should be designed for a balance of users, including pedestrians and vehicles.
 - b. The Board noted that nearby streets are very congested at peak travel hours and two of the adjacent streets are heavily traveled arterials (Fairview Ave N and Denny Way). Therefore, it's critical to retain 2-way vehicle functions on John Street.
 - c. The Board supported wider pedestrian areas on John Street, but the street needs to remain functional for both vehicles and pedestrians. A mix of pedestrians and vehicles has been shown to result in more active, vital, and successful streetscapes.
 - d. Parking access should be from Boren Ave N, and the garage access should be designed to minimize negative impacts to the pedestrian mid-block connections.
 - e. The Board discussed the balance of retail and residential uses around the site. John Street, Boren Ave N, and Thomas St are the quieter street fronts adjacent to these blocks. The pedestrian focus on John St would be complemented by retail, but given the traffic volumes and context of the Fairview Ave N and Denny Way developments, it may be a better response to include retail on those street frontages and residential on the quieter street frontages.
 - i. At the next EDG meeting, the applicant should provide studies of the street frontages and the 'park' frontage, and explore the possibilities of retail and residential on each of the frontages.
 - f. The Board supported concentrating the retail at strategic locations, rather than dispersing the retail around the site.
 - g. The southwest corner at Denny Way and Boren Ave N. offers a great opportunity for a larger retail tenant such as a grocery.
 - h. The Board would support a mid-block crosswalk at John St to connect the two proposed north-south legs of the mid-block connections. However, the Board noted that a crosswalk would require SDOT approval.
- 2. Mid-block Connections.** The mid-block connections should be designed to be inviting to the public, including maximizing light and air, and creating destinations at the interior of the site.

- a. The Board was concerned that the mid-block connections were covered with building near the edges of the site. The Board noted that the proportion of the opening is important in the design of these spaces. The street entrances to the mid-block connections should be carved away. The design of the mid-block connections should be extremely legible as public space.
 - b. The mid-block connections should be open to the sky wherever possible. If overhead building area is proposed, it should be designed to make it feel as open and light as possible. The Board suggested delicate or glazed overhead elements such as those used in Alley 24.
 - c. The building program on either side of the mid-block connection and the breezeway is critical to activating the space. Including retail or a special and unique landscaping feature in the courtyard may help to activate the mid-block connections.
 - d. The circulation of option 3B (a secondary connection to John St) should be maintained, even with the Option 4 massing.
 - e. The Board would be open to departures from the east-west requirement for the mid-block crossing if the configuration responds better to nearby opportunities and destinations.
- 3. Open Space.** The landscaped open space on the south block should be retained, since it includes significant mature landscaping and the location creates a vista to the historic landmark to the north.
- a. Three of the four Board members supported development of Massing Option 4.
 - b. The Board supported the idea of additional podium and tower height on the north block (except on John St), in exchange for preserving the landscaped open space on the south block.
 - c. The Board also supported the idea of differentiating the height of the towers, and creative design that could result from a Land Use Code text amendment to shift the development around between the north and south blocks.
 - d. The Board noted that the park's historic relationship to the landmark, and the physical relationship to the landmark are an important opportunity in the context and should be enhanced.
 - e. The Board noted that if possible, the additional height on the north block should be made possible through a design review departure, so it can be examined for the best response to the site and context.
- 4. Tower Locations.** The Board supported the proposed tower locations, but wanted to see different tower orientation, variety in height, and conceptual indication of how to vary the design of the towers.
- a. The Board requested additional studies showing the shadow impacts and response to context if the southeast tower on the south block were oriented east-west instead of north-south.
 - b. Generally speaking, the towers should not present a campus appearance. The design of the four towers and the podia should be differentiated to avoid a mega block appearance.
 - c. The Board supported the applicant's intent for verticality, referencing the historic landmark art deco design, and extruding this expression into the southeast tower on

the north block. The Board would like to see study of the architectural response between the landmark and the north site. The Board noted that the southeast tower on this block has the opportunity to be 'special.'

- d. The Board supported the intent for a more dramatic design of all the towers, as shown in the inspirational images in the packet

5. Residential Units at Street Level. The Board was concerned that townhouse style units on Fairview Ave N. would be better located on a quieter street frontage, but careful design of these units could potentially resolve the issue.

- a. Residential units with tall stoops (8-10 steps) could create a desirable transition between the residences and the street level.
- b. Examine examples in Seattle, Vancouver, and elsewhere for potential solutions. The Board strongly supported fresh innovative design ideas that create successful residential street frontages.
- c. For local examples of residential street frontage design, the Board suggested 400 Boren Ave N, 430 8th Ave N, Stack House, and Alley 24.
- d. The townhouse style units should be architecturally expressed as 2-story units, using upper level setbacks or other strategies.

SECOND EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE July 16, 2014

1. Vehicle Circulation, Parking Access, and Streetscape Character. The Board supported the proposed woonerf design of John Street and the parking access from Boren Ave N. The Board recommended that the street level spaces should be varied across the two blocks. (PL1-III, PL2-I, PL3-II, DC1-B, DC3-A, DC3-B)

- a. The Board was concerned that the proposed 20' roadway would be too narrow for two-way vehicle traffic, and suggested a 22' roadway. However, the Board acknowledged that the applicant is working with SDOT, and the Board will accept the minimum roadway width required by SDOT. (PL1-I, DC1-B)
- b. Landscape design should be used to alert drivers and pedestrians to each others' presence at the driveway entries. (DC1-B)
- c. The program and site/landscaping design should enhance the varied characters of the street level spaces, such as the woonerf, active pedestrian spaces, the private park, the north courtyard as a quiet designed space, etc. (DC1-A.2, DC3-A, DC3-B)
- d. The Board observed that the historic landmark building could lack porosity to the John Street frontage. The Board therefore supported the intent for food trucks at John Street, since the activity could help to offset the lack of porosity in the landmark building. (PL1-I, PL3-II, DC1-A)

2. Mid-block Connections. The mid-block connections should be designed to respond to adjacent destinations, draw users into the middle of the blocks, and maximize light and air in the mid-block connection.

- a. The Board preferred Massing Option 5C with the diagonal mid-block connection to the northeast corner of the north block. The Board noted that this connection leads to the Troy Laundry proposed mid-block connection across the street. This configuration also creates more pedestrian interest and may maximize pedestrian

- activity. The Board noted that while this option was based on preservation of the Seattle Time Production Building façade, it's a valid massing option response to context, separate from the preservation of that façade. (CS2-A, CS2-C, CS2-I, PL1-I-i)
- b. The colonnade at the south and west edges of the park may create unnecessarily shadowed areas along the mid-block connection. This area should be designed to maximize light and air to the pedestrian areas. (CS1-A, CS1-B)
 - c. The mid-block connection from John St to the north block provides an interesting vista, but the middle of the north block should be designed to provide a destination for pedestrians. The Board suggested a child play area, art feature, a bike corridor, or other focused use to draw people into the north block courtyard. (CS2-B, PL4-B, DC3-II)
 - d. The entry points to the mid-block passageways need to be designed to be strongly inviting to the public and encourage pedestrian use. (DC3-B)
 - e. The entry gates should be designed to relate to the design concept and pedestrian streetscape character. (DC2-D)
 - f. The design of the passageways where building areas above the mid-block connection, and the design of colonnades should be designed to be minimal, bright, inviting, interesting, and leading to a destination. Adjacent retail uses help with light and activation. The proposed building areas above the mid-block connections could be acceptable with a combination of design strategies. (CS2-I-iii, CS3-I, PL1-I, PL2-B, DC1-A)

3. Seattle Times Private Park. Preserving the park is strongly supported, given the panorama to the historic landmark and the existing Exceptional Trees. (CS1-D, CS2-A, DC3-C)

- 4. Design Concept.** The towers should be differentiated within and across the blocks, at the base and the towers. (DC2-B, DC2-C, DC2-D, DC4-A)
- a. The Board supported the varied tower heights, and recommended that the podia should also be varied in height and design within and between the two blocks. The design of the various building elements should be both varied and harmonious. (CS2-C, CS3-I, CS3-II-i)
 - b. The tower above the landmark should be “special” and visibly different from the other three towers. The Board was hesitant about the concept with the extruded Art Deco expression, and suggested a more modern backdrop may be a better response to the landmark structure below. (CS3-II, DC2-B)
 - c. All towers should use solar control on the south and west facades. (CS1-B-3)
 - d. The tower expressions should be woven into the podium expression to relate to the street level experience and to visually ground the towers. (DC2-B, DC2-C, DC2-D)
 - e. The Board directed the applicant to study the possibility of integrating parts or all of the Seattle Times Production Building façade into the proposed design and program. The evolution of the preferred Fairview Ave N façade should be demonstrated at the Recommendation meeting. (CS2-A, CS2-C, CS3-II)
 - i. The Board acknowledged that the Seattle Times Production Building façade may be designated as a historic landmark. If that happens, then the Landmarks Preservation Board direction would override this particular Early Design Guidance item.

- ii. If the façade is not designated as a historic landmark, then the Board noted that incorporating part or all of the Seattle Times Production Building façade could add texture, human scale, and a sense of place to the Fairview Ave N façade. The Board also encouraged efforts to create porosity along this façade. (CS2-A, CS3-I)
- iii. The Board noted that preserving the entire Seattle Times Production Building façade could result in a disconnect between the street facing façade and the sidewalk, and would create a design challenge in grounding the north block tower to the street level. (DC2-B)

- 5. Residential Units at Street Level.** The street level residential units should be designed to respond to the adjacent street conditions and provide usable residential stoops. (PL3-III)
- a. The distance between the Fairview curb edge and the residential units should be maximized, in order to separate residential units from the high traffic volumes and congestion. The proposed setback helps to respond to grade changes and traffic, but the Board recommended setting the residential units back a few more feet, in exchange for narrowing the north courtyard by a few feet. (PL3-III)
 - b. The overhang above the stoop should enhance the residential unit stoop relationship to the street. (DC3-B-4)
 - i. The Board appreciated the various studies of street level residential in the EDG presentation, but noted that the Vancouver examples don't include building overhang above the stoops, and Vancouver has strict street level design requirements for residential units at grade.

- 6. Natural Systems and Opportunities.** The design should integrate a Natural systems response to larger site and opportunities. (CS1-A, CS1-B, CS1-D)

INITIAL RECOMMENDATION February 3, 2016

- 1. Vehicle Circulation, Parking Access, and Streetscape Character.** The Board supported the John Street improvements and the preliminary direction of the streetscape design, but recommended changes to the driveway/sidewalk area and requested more detailed information for the streetscape plan.
- a. The Board supported the direction of the John Street improvements and acknowledged that SDOT is supportive of the roadway width and design. (PL1-I, DC1-B)
 - i. The John St woonerf should relate to the streetscape design on both street frontages at John St. The Board would like to see how the street will be designed with a pedestrian focus, consistent with the woonerf concept.
 - b. The driveway crossing over the sidewalk is very close to the mid-block connection and needs to be modified to provide sufficient safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. (DC1-B)
 - i. The Board recommended changes to the driveway grade to allow a flat approach from the garage to the sidewalk, providing a landscape buffer or other design to channel pedestrians safely out of the mid-block connection,

and strategies such as paving changes and warning lights to alert drivers and pedestrians to the crossing.

- ii. The Board discussed the possibility of moving the driveway slightly to the south, but agreed that the safety challenge of the driveway could likely be addressed with the recommended changes in the current location.
 - c. Additional graphics and information are required for the Board to determine whether the proposal sufficiently responds to the Early Design Guidance regarding program and site landscaping and street level spaces. (DC1-A.2, DC3-A, DC3-B)
 - i. The Board supported the street level uses of the buildings and the overall conceptual landscape plan.
 - ii. Additional information is required for the Board to understand the proposed streetscape design, including paving, sidewalk furniture, and landscaping.
 - iii. The streetscape should be varied and interesting, designed with a human scale, and designed for retail legibility and easy wayfinding.
- 2. Mid-block Connections.** The Board appreciated the design of the mid-block connection and supported integrating the tower with the western portion of the mid-block connection.
- a. The Board specifically supported the art wall and the upper level setbacks above the art wall near the west edge of the mid-block connection, the bridge element, the proposal to not include gates in response to EDG, and the lighting in the covered area of the mid-block connection. (CS2-I-iii, CS3-I, PL1-I, PL2-B)
 - b. The presentation materials and packet were insufficient for the Board to determine whether the architectural features and materials sufficiently responded to EDG. The Board will review this information at the next Recommendation meeting (CS2-I-iii, CS3-I, PL1-I, PL2-B, DC1-A)
- 3. Seattle Times Private Park.** The Board strongly supported the proposal to preserve the private park, given the existing Exceptional Trees and the fact that the open space will maximize the appearance of the historic landmark façade to the north (Seattle Times building).
- a. The Board discussed the public comments advocating for retention of the Atlas cedar at the northeast corner. The Board noted that removal of this tree may be warranted, given the extensive proposed tree retention, the apparent health of this particular tree, and the ability to visually connect the park to the streetscape with removal of this tree. The Board would like to hear if strategic pruning could achieve similar sight lines as removal. (CS1-D, CS2-A, DC3-C)
 - i. SDCI staff clarified that if it turns out the tree is Exceptional, the Design Review Board would need to consider an alternate design that retains the tree.
 - b. The Board strongly supported keeping the time capsule as proposed. (CS2-A, DC3-C)
- 4. Design Concept.** The Board supported the overall tower forms and angles, especially as the tower angles reflect the angled roadway in the woonerf design, but recommended changes to the north tower.
- a. The north tower design should be refined to make it distinct from the south tower, especially at the top. (CS2-C, CS3-I, CS3-II-i)

- i. One possible strategy is to emphasize the drama through the expression of angles and the slender appearance.
 - ii. The Board acknowledged that the south tower includes a stronger design expression with the concrete frame element and the shape of the roof form.
- b. The Board discussed the possibility of modifying the orientation of the southeast tower. The Board observed that the proposed tower orientation maximizes views across the site to Lake Union from the south, the proposed tower angles help to reduce impacts to privacy of the building to the east, and Fairview Ave N separates the site from the building to the east. The Board didn't recommend modifying the tower orientation. (CS2-A, CS2-D)
- c. The southwest 125' building is taller than the 65' massing height discussed at EDG. The Board recommended that the height of this building requires a different design concept than just a combination of the podium or tower elements. The Board noted that the location of the additional mass is acceptable, but this 125' tall corner needs further refinement to be cohesively designed. (CS2-C, CS3-I, CS3-II-i. DC2-B, DC2-C, DC2-D, DC4-A)
- d. The Board supported the design of other areas of the buildings, such as the varied podium heights, the frame elements on the podium facades, the integration of 65' high podiums and towers, and the solar controls. (CS1-B, CS3-II, DC4-A)

5. Natural Systems and Opportunities. The Board observed that the design appears to have responded well to the need to integrate a natural systems response to larger site and opportunities. (CS1-A, CS1-B, CS1-D)

FINAL RECOMMENDATION May 18, 2016

- 1. Vehicle Circulation, Parking Access, and Streetscape Character.** The Board approved of the changes to the pedestrian areas and driveway/sidewalk zone, and recommended conditions to further refine these areas.
- a. The Board noted that the revised design with the leveled driveway near the sidewalk, the textured sidewalk paving near the driveway, and the colorful glazed wall separating walkway from driveway were positive responses to the Initial Recommendations and critical aspects of the design approval.
 - i. The Board recommended a condition that in order to maximize safety, the textured paving should be used only where needed to respond to ADA requirements, and not used for decoration near the driveway entry. (DC1-B)
 - b. The Board commended the applicant for a thoughtful design response of the John Street woonerf. (PL1-I, DC1-B)
 - c. The Board discussed the lack of variety for paving and landscaping along the street frontages, and recommended conditions to modify the streetscape to create defined areas and variety in the design, as well as respond to public comments regarding pedestrian safety crossing the street:
 - i. Design the paving plan to emphasize entries and define the plaza spaces and seating areas adjacent to the sidewalk. The Board noted that one strategy could be to extend the special paving from these areas into the public sidewalk areas. (DC1-A.2, DC3-A, DC3-B)

- ii. Design the paving and furniture on the south street frontage to be consistent with the Denny Streetscape Plan. (DC3-B, DC3-II)
 - iii. Extend the planting areas or use other design strategies to discourage pedestrians from crossing Denny at Boren, as allowed by the Seattle Department of Transportation. (PL2-B)
 - iv. Where possible, provide covered bike parking at the sidewalk level. (PL4-B)
 - d. The Board discussed the lighting plan and recommended a condition that no uplighting should be provided other than where the building covers the lit area. (PL1-I)
 - e. The Board recommended approval of the proposed signage plan as shown. (DC4-A)
 - f. The Board supported the design of the children’s park and suggested irrigating the artificial turf for hygiene. (DC3-B)
- 2. Mid-block Connection.** The Board noted that the location of the mid-block connection and the glazed art wall along the mid-block connection are critical aspects of the recommended approval. The Board suggested that the applicant carefully design the colorful glass wall to respond to the variation in the paving pattern and tones. (CS2-I-iii, CS3-I, PL1-I, PL2-B, DC1-A)
- 3. Seattle Times Private Park.** The Board echoed public comments and commended the applicant for a thoughtful design response of the Seattle Times private park, and supported the proposal to remove the northeast Atlas cedar and replace it with a 5” caliper specimen deciduous tree. (CS1-D, CS2-A, DC3-C)
- a. The Board supported the proposed time capsule relocation as proposed. (CS2-A, DC3-C)
 - b. The Board supported the retention of the trees and the berm at the trees. The Board also approved of the diagonal pedestrian connection between the mid-block connection and the park, and agreed that the design should minimize any further pedestrian connections between the trees. (CS2-B)
 - c. The Board recommended a condition to provide a varied lush landscape in the planted areas adjacent to the trees, with shrubs selected to allow a visual connection between the park and the rest of the site. (CS2-B)
- 4. Southwest 125’ Tall building.** The Board acknowledged public concern regarding the building height and discussed the transition in scale from this building to the buildings to the west, and the previous direction provided at the Initial Recommendation meeting. The Board observed, however, that the design of this portion of the building has evolved and includes design strategies to reduce scale through articulation and materials. (CS1-B, CS3-II, DC4-A)
- a. To further address this transition, the Board recommended a condition to reduce the scale of the 125’ tall building on the west and south facades. The solution should use both materials and articulation to create a visual separation between the 125’ tall building and the south tower, similar to the physical separation from the north tower. (CS3-I, DC2-B, DC2-C, DC2-D)
 - i. The Board noted that this condition also relates to departure 3 (see end of report), to reduce the upper level setbacks of this building.

- b. The Board offered examples of potential design strategies to meet this condition:
 - i. Extend the vertical elements;
 - ii. Extend the orange glazed corner;
 - iii. Modify the roofline to emphasize both the corner design and the articulation in the lower portions of the building
 - c. The Board agreed with public comment and also recommended a condition to add dates to the steel headline quotes on the façade, and demonstrate how the headlines will be curated. (CS2-I)
 - i. The Board suggested retaining a graphic artist to design the letters for these quotes.
 - d. The Board noted that critical aspects of the proposed design as shown include the separation between the southwest building and the north tower, the brightly colorful glazed corner element, and the tapered columns at the base of the southwest corner. (CS2-C, CS3-I, CS3-II-i. DC2-B, DC2-C, DC2-D, DC4-A)
5. **Northwest Tower.** The Board observed that the northwest tower design has been modified to be sufficiently different from the southeast tower, in response to Initial Recommendations. The Board recommended approval of the towers as shown, and noted that the framed elements on the sides of the northwest tower and the butterfly shape at the top of the northwest tower are critical aspects of the design in providing a different appearance from the southeast tower. (CS2-C, CS3-I, CS3-II-i)

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

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

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.

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-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-3. Full Block Sites: Break up long facades of full-block buildings to avoid a monolithic presence. Provide detail and human scale at street-level, and include repeating elements to add variety and rhythm to the façade and overall building design.

South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:

CS2-I Responding to Site Characteristics

CS2-I-iii. Gateways: Reinforce community gateways through the use of architectural elements, streetscape features, landscaping and/or signage. Gateways can be defined through landscaping, artwork, and references to the history of the location that create a sense of place. Gateways are transition locations, places that mark entry or departure points to a neighborhood for automobiles and pedestrians. They are sites that create opportunities for identification, a physical marker for the community to notice they are entering a special place. Methods to establish gateways should consider the site's characteristics such as topography, views or surrounding building patterns. Elements could include building out to meet the corner where appropriate, or tools such as:

- a. setbacks to allow for pedestrian friendly spaces;
- b. signage;
- c. landscaping;
- d. artwork;
- e. facade treatments.

South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:

CS3-I Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility

CS3-I-ii. Reduce Visual Bulk: Consider using architectural features to reduce building scale such as:

- a. landscaping;
- b. trellis;
- c. complementary materials;
- d. detailing;
- e. accent trim.

CS3-II Architectural Context

CS3-II-i. Mix of Building Style: Support the existing fine-grained character of the neighborhood with a mix of building styles.

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

South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:

PL1-I Human Activity

PL1-I-i. Open Connections: Keep neighborhood connections open, and discourage closed campuses.

PL1-I-ii. Pedestrian Network: 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.

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-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.

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.

South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:

PL3-II Human Activity

PL3-II-i. Public/Private Transition: Create graceful transitions at the streetscape level between the public and private uses.

PL3-II-ii. Active Facades: Design facades to encourage activity to spill out from business onto the sidewalk, and vice-versa.

PL3-II-iii. Coordinate Retail/Pedestrian Activity: Reinforce retail concentrations with compatible spaces that encourage pedestrian activity.

PL3-II-iv. Activity Clusters: Create businesses and community activity clusters through colocation of retail and pedestrian uses as well as other high pedestrian traffic opportunities.

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-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.

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

DC1-B Vehicular Access and Circulation

DC1-B-1. Access Location and Design: Choose locations for vehicular access, service uses, and delivery areas that minimize conflict between vehicles and non-motorists wherever possible. Emphasize use of the sidewalk for pedestrians, and create safe and attractive conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.

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-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-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-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.

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

South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:

DC3-A Building-Open Space Relationship

DC3-A-1. Interior/Exterior Fit: Develop an open space concept in conjunction with the architectural concept to ensure that interior and exterior spaces relate well to each other and support the functions of the development.

DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities

DC3-B-1. Meeting User Needs: Plan the size, uses, activities, and features of each open space to meet the needs of expected users, ensuring each space has a purpose and function.

DC3-B-2. Matching Uses to Conditions: Respond to changing environmental conditions such as seasonal and daily light and weather shifts through open space design and/or programming of open space activities.

DC3-B-3. Connections to Other Open Space: Site and design project-related open spaces to connect with, or enhance, the uses and activities of other nearby public open space where appropriate.

DC3-B-4. Multifamily Open Space: Design common and private open spaces in multifamily projects for use by all residents to encourage physical activity and social interaction.

DC3-C Design

DC3-C-1. Reinforce Existing Open Space: Where a strong open space concept exists in the neighborhood, reinforce existing character and patterns of street tree planting, buffers or treatment of topographic changes. Where no strong patterns exist, initiate a strong open space concept that other projects can build upon in the future.

DC3-C-2. Amenities/Features: Create attractive outdoor spaces suited to the uses envisioned for the project.

South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:

DC3-II Landscaping To Enhance The Building and/or Site

DC3-II-i. Integrated Artwork: Consider integrating artwork into publicly accessible areas of a building and landscape that evokes a sense of place related to the previous uses of the area. Neighborhood themes may include service industries such as laundries, auto row, floral businesses, photography district, arts district, maritime, etc.

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-1. 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.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation was based upon the departures' potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departures.

Staff Note: The proposal is not vested to Land Use Code requirements as described in SMC 23.76.026.

1. **Structure Height – Rooftop Coverage (SMC 23.48.025.C.7):** The Code allows up to 65% rooftop coverage for screened mechanical equipment, providing all rooftop features are located at least 10' away from the roof edge.

The applicant proposes to exceed the 65% rooftop coverage by 81.1% for the southeast tower.

This departure would provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guideline DS2-B.1 by creating two distinct tower designs with sculpted top forms, consistent with the Board's Early Design Guidance for this proposal.

The Board discussed the public concern related to this departure, and the concern about the need for rooftop coverage. However, in this case the unenclosed area of the roof adds drama and better meets the intent of the Design Guidelines. **The Board recommended approval of a departure for the unenclosed area of the roof forms if needed, but the enclosed building area should not exceed 65% of the rooftop area.** The Board unanimously recommended that DPD grant the departure, with this condition.

2. **Structure Height – Rooftop Features (SMC 23.48.025.C.7.b):** The Code requires rooftop features to be located at least 10' away from the roof edge.

The applicant proposes to extend the mechanical penthouse to have as little as a 0' setback from some of the roof edges of the southeast tower, and as little as a 0' setback from some of the roof edges of the southeast tower. The specific areas of setback departure are shown in the Recommendation packet.

This departure would provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guideline DC2-B.1 by creating two distinct tower designs with sculpted top forms, consistent with the Board's Early Design Guidance for this proposal.

The Board unanimously recommended that DPD grant the departure.

3. **Upper Level Setbacks (SMC 23.48.235.A.2):** The Code requires a setback of 1' for every 2 additional feet of height above a certain height, to a maximum 15' setback.

The applicant proposes to allow portions of the Boren Ave N façade that are more than 75' tall to be set back 9'4" instead of 15'.

This departure would provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines CS2-A and CS2-C by creating a strong southwest corner with visible articulation at the highly visible intersection adjacent to Denny Way.

The Board unanimously recommended that DPD grant the departure, subject to the conditions discussed and retention of the setbacks at street level.

4. **Street Level Development Standards - Permitted Setbacks (SMC 23.48.240.B.1.b):** The Code requires a maximum 12' setback at street lot lines, requires that the setbacks must

be landscaped, and allows larger setbacks for 30% of the street façade as long as the additional setbacks are landscaped.

The applicant proposes a departure to exceed the maximum setback and not landscape the setback in some areas adjacent to Fairview Ave N, Denny Way, and Boren Ave N. The maximum setbacks range from 15' to 24'3" in these areas.

This departure would provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines CS2-B.3 and CS2-C.1 by providing more publicly usable surfaces and plazas for pedestrians, responding to the Denny Way Streetscape Concept Plan, providing sufficient distance from street trees, and by providing varied open spaces and entries across the site.

The Board unanimously recommended that DPD grant the departure.

RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation summarized above was based on the design review packet dated May 18, 2016, and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the May 18, 2016 Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, the four Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design with the following conditions:

- 1. In order to maximize safety, the textured paving should be used only where needed to respond to ADA requirements, and not used for decoration near the driveway entry. (DC1-B)**
- 2. Design the paving plan to emphasize entries and define the plaza spaces and seating areas adjacent to the sidewalk. One strategy could be to extend the special paving from these areas into the public sidewalk areas. (DC1-A.2, DC3-A, DC3-B)**
- 3. Design the paving and furniture on the south street frontage to be consistent with the Denny Streetscape Plan. (DC3-B, DC3-II)**
- 4. Extend the planting areas or use other design strategies to discourage pedestrians from crossing Denny at Boren, as allowed by Seattle Department of Transportation. (PL2-B)**
- 5. Where possible, provide covered bike parking at the sidewalk level. (PL4-B)**
- 6. Provide a varied lush landscape in the planted areas adjacent to the trees, with shrubs selected to allow a visual connection between the park and the rest of the site. (CS2-B)**
- 7. Modify the design to further reduce the scale of the 125' tall building on the west and south facades. The solution should use both materials and articulation to create a visual separation between the 125' tall building and the south tower, similar to the physical separation from the north tower. (CS3-I, DC2-B, DC2-C, DC2-D)**
- 8. Add dates to the steel headline quotes on the façade, and demonstrate how the headlines will be curated. (CS2-I)**
- 9. No uplighting should be provided other than where the building covers the lit area. (PL1-I)**

10. If departure for the unenclosed area of the roof forms is needed, then the enclosed building area should not exceed 65% of the rooftop area. (DS2-B.1)