



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE WEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3017320/ 3017321 (3017687 /3017686 for no-vacation options)

Address: 111 Westlake Ave N/ 110 9th Ave N

Applicant: Tobin Thompson of ZGF Architects, for Vulcan

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, July 02, 2014

Board Members Present: Mindy Black (Chair)
Katie Idziorek
Christine Harrington
Boyd Pickrell
Janet Stephenson *

Board Members Absent: None

DPD Staff Present: Garry Papers, MArch, Senior Land Use Planner

* J Stephenson disclosed at beginning of meeting that the firm she works for is bidding on work for the project developer, but has no financial stake in the current proposal and believes it does not influence her objective commentary on this project.

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: SM 240/125-400

Nearby Zones: (North) SM 160/85-240
(South) DMC 240/290-400
(East) SM 240/125-400
(West) SM 240/125-400 (public park)

Lot Area: West half block: 40,379 sf
East half block: 38,887 sf



Current Development:

The east half block is occupied by a temporary showroom structure and surface parking lot. The west half block is currently occupied by an interim private sports court and field. An unimproved public alley right of way bisects the block north-south. A triangular parcel at the southwest corner is public right of way with below grade utilities.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The 4.5 acre Denny public park is to the west across 9th Ave N. A newer mixed-use block (Enso/2201 Westlake) with a 12 story office and 19 story residential tower is located to the south, across Denny Way; a small public plaza is at the Denny/Westlake intersection. Another mixed use block with hotel, 261 residential units and ground level commercial is to the southeast across Denny. A newer 11 story residential structure with 208 units and ground level commercial is across Westlake Ave to the east. 6-8 story residential and office structures, existing and proposed, are located across John Street and elsewhere north of the site. The block is located at a highly visible and pivotal intersection between Downtown and the rapidly transforming South Lake Union (SLU) neighborhood.

Access:

Pedestrian and vehicular access is from the four surrounding streets. The SLU streetcar runs along Westlake Ave and many bus routes run along Denny Way. John Street to the north is a designated Green Street. Although there is no existing paved alley, per code all vehicle and loading access should be from the anticipated mid-block alley.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

None.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project comprises two half block proposals with two distinct Master Use Permit (MUP) numbers, separated by a public alley right of way. Since both projects have the same applicant, development time schedule and design team, the entire block is being reviewed holistically by the Design Review Board (DRB).

The DRB considered the 2 distinct use options (3 massing options for each), an all-commercial full block (240 ft maximum height), and a mixed use block (including a 400 ft residential tower). Most of the comments below focused on the mixed use concept, but the east half block massing and use is essentially the same for both options, and many of the issues and comments regarding the pedestrian and ground plane development are transferable to any concept. See the reports last page for the DRB conclusion about next steps for each use.

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#3017320 (east half block):

Mixed use option: 18 story office tower of approximately 420,000 sf; about 15,000 sf of ground level commercial; about 400 spaces of below grade parking.

All-commercial option: (same as above)

#3017321 (west half block):

Mixed use option: 41 story residential tower with about 500 units; 1 story commercial structure of about 15,000 sf; about 400 spaces of below grade parking.

All-commercial option: 7 story office structure of approximately 150,000 sf; 1 story commercial structure of about 15,000 sf; about 200 spaces of below grade parking.

The design proposal assumes a Subterranean Alley Vacation by the applicant, which allows for one unified parking structure below grade. A Vacation follows a separate, parallel review process by SDOT and the Design Commission. Two additional MUP numbers 3017686 and 3017687 are attached to this review, for the possibility of a No-subterranean alley vacation, in which case each half block would proceed with independent parking and attendant access ramps.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE July 2, 2014

DESIGN PROPOSAL

The Early Design Guidance (EDG) design proposal booklet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number 3017320 at this website: http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp. The booklet is also available to view, by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

Mailing Public Resource Center

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

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

- Strongly preferred the mixed use option as it generates 24 hour life for the block and the remaining 4th corner of a designated neighborhood heart.
- Concerned the large and singular ramp will have heavy vehicle movements that will interrupt the Green Street continuity of John Street.
- Suggested that vehicle ramp should be moved west of the alley or to the typical alley location, to not impact the important pedestrian character of Westlake.
- Concerned that large and frequent trucks exiting the proposed ramp, will congest John Street and negatively impact that designated Green Street, and surrounding traffic patterns.

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PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members (the Board) provided the following siting and design guidance. The Board identified the following **citywide 2013 Seattle Design Guidelines and South Lake Union (SLU) Neighborhood specific guidelines** as Priority Guidelines for this specific project, while all guidelines remain applicable.

The Priority Guidelines are summarized below; for the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

All page references below are to the EDG booklet dated July 02, 2014.

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-1. Sun and Wind: Take advantage of solar exposure and natural ventilation. Use local wind patterns and solar gain to reduce the need for mechanical ventilation and heating where possible.

CS1-B-2. Daylight and Shading: Maximize daylight for interior and exterior spaces and minimize shading on adjacent sites through the placement and/or design of structures on site.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed how this sizable project with large expanses of cladding and glazing, deserves an advanced sustainability and energy strategy, and this should inform the project at fundamental massing and program levels. As a LEED compliant project, sustainability should inform the concept from initial stages and not consist solely of technical fixes or tacked-on elements to minimally meet code. Office daylighting, shading and solar gain are particularly of focus (especially since the office forms have long east and west facades), including balconies, light shelves and other façade elements. This guidance also addresses guideline CS1-I, especially regarding sun access to public spaces, and shadow impacts from the proposed massing.

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

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- 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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the urban design opportunities and context at length, as this block is located at a strategic intersection in SLU and the city at large. It is at the kink in the Westlake Avenue alignment, where 2 street grids meet, and an identified ‘gateway’ in the SLU neighborhood plan. In addition, the block is fronted by two major transit arterials, and Denny Park on the west side. The Board agreed this block has a primary role to carefully complete this intersection, as the other 3 corners are recently built and recede back from the intersection, affording good south light to the block.

The Denny Way Streetscape Concept Plan was adopted by City Council in October 2013, (JOINT Directors Rules: DPD 10-2013; SDOT 02-2013) and includes a “concept detail” plan for the Westlake/Denny vicinity. Implementation of the Concept Plan recommendations are encouraged but compliance is voluntary.

This block should establish and reinforce a unique sense of place, as described in the Streetscape Concept Plan: “...make the intersection of Westlake Ave. and Denny Way one of Seattle’s great urban places”. The ground plan and public realm should not resemble a generic block with mid-block connector found elsewhere within the SLU fabric. Because of relatively diminutive neighbors, the ‘architectural presence’ will be assured, so massing, materiality and composition must be superior; see comments under CS2-I, DC2-B, and DC4-A for more comments about these topics.

CS2-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces

- CS2-B-1. Site Characteristics:** Allow characteristics of sites to inform the design, especially where the street grid and topography create unusually shaped lots that can add distinction to the building massing.
- 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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed this block has distinct and exciting adjacencies on all sides, and has multiple pedestrian and public space obligations to respond to; standard design approaches are simply not appropriate at this pivotal location. South: Denny Way is a busy bus arterial and deserves an extra wide sidewalk per the Council-adopted Street Concept Plan (more than the 18 ft shown in the section (pg 19), but possibly less than the 40 ft shown on the page 18 plan). East: Westlake is a streetcar street stitching SLU into downtown

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and it deserves a continuously activated and permeable commercial ground floor. West: The ground floor should graciously frame the park frontage and provide eyes on the street/park security. North: the designated Green Street of John should have maximum landscape continuity for the 'quieter' east-west connector. The Board supported the residential building and entrance on the west side of the block as reinforcing the open space across the street, however, see comments under PL2-II regarding the specific uses and street frontage there.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board supported the holistic full block design approach to this strategic block, and applauded the applicants for treating the public alley ROW as more than an asphalt service road, which would inhibit pedestrian movements.

NOTE: The applicants are pursuing a subterranean-only Alley Vacation through the SDOT/Design Commission process, in order to create more efficient full block below grade parking levels, and to minimize ramp apertures at the ground level. The Board supported the subterranean vacation option shown on page 33 and 59, because while it maintains public use of the alley alignment, it reduces the amount of private vehicle movements through the middle of the block, reduces ramps and maybe eliminates loading docks at the ground level, and creates a more seamless pedestrian environment.

All of this conceptual support is qualified by the specific cautions listed under DC1-B, and is pending the Vacation Review, and the city review of any required Type 1 Directors decisions, in particular the location and size of the singular loading/parking ramp shown on page 59 (and implied elsewhere).

South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:

CS2-I Responding to Site Characteristics

CS2-I-i. Views: Encourage provision of "outlooks and overlooks" for the public to view the lake and cityscapes. Examples include provision of public plazas and/or other public open spaces and changing the form or facade setbacks of the building to enhance opportunities for views.

CS2-I-iii. Gateways: *[NOTE; per the SLU Neighborhood Guidelines pg 2, Westlake & Denny is a designated 'Gateway'.]* 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

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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.

CS2-I-iv. Heart Locations: Several areas have been identified as "heart locations." [NOTE; per the SLU Neighborhood Guidelines pg 3, Westlake Avenue North, and Denny Park are both designated 'Hearts'.] 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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board strongly agreed this block occupies a pivotal location between the designated Neighborhood Hearts of Denny Park and Westlake Avenue, as well as framing a Neighborhood Gateway at the Westlake/Denny intersection. This reinforces the text in the Street Concept Plan "to preserve a generous open space linkage from Denny Park to Westlake Avenue", and amplifies that any through block patterns on this block should be more permeable, welcoming and intuitive than a typical SLU mid-block connector (also see PL1-B and PL2-D).

The Board supported all the items a-e under 'CS2-I-iii Gateways' as strongly relevant at the southeast corner location, and all should be evident at the next meeting. The Board supported the lower massing response (and distinctive character implied) to the diagonal Bell Street view corridor shown at the southwest corner of the site (options 5 & 6, page 37). However, the Board requested a more assertive integration of public 'outlooks and overlooks' and roofdecks, at this ideal southwest and park facing prospect- and several more elsewhere throughout this uniquely situated project - including public overlooks of the vital intersection itself.

CS2-II Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility

CS2-II-i. Corridor Experience: Address both the pedestrian and auto experience through

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building placement, scale and details with specific attention to regional transportation corridors such as Mercer, Aurora, Fairview and Westlake. These locations, pending changes in traffic patterns, may evolve with transportation improvements.

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.

CS2-II-iii. Width Ratios: Relate proportions of buildings to the width and scale of the street.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board supported the applicant preferred massing option 6 (pg 48/49) for the mixed use program, because it places only the narrow side of the residential tower adjacent to the park, and provides both towers with minimal proximity overlaps. The Board then discussed the pros and cons of the strong office tower mass marking or 'holding' the southeast corner of the block at this pivotal location. They agreed the other 3 corners of this important urban room recede, so a strong vertical form at the project corner can be explored, but with three essential qualifiers:

- a) The tower will occupy a valuable portion of 'open sky', therefore the upper level articulation must be interesting and intentionally transition to the sky, not be a minimalist cut off (as office buildings often presume).
- b) All sides of the existing urban room must be studied for datums and other design cues to inform the medium scale composition and materiality of the proposed corner mass.
- c) The ground plane at the corner must be deeply recessed to accommodate pedestrian clusters and desire lines, along Denny, Westlake and perhaps others, and the 2-4 floors above must be carved back for sun penetration and to set a proper scale, also informed by context. This subtractive volume or 'super-porch' (suggested by the sketch, page 63 upper left) is a critical part of the urban design interlock, and should be retained.

The Board agreed the residential tower should be set back from the northwest property corner as shown on page 67, but cautioned that the dramatic gasket/podium expression shown, and the entire west elevation of the block, deserves study as an important backdrop to the Denny Park public space, and visibility to Denny Way traffic. This block is not buried in fabric, so requires multiple perspective views to test composition and various urban design relationships.

CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes

CS3-A-1. Fitting Old and New Together: Create compatibility between new projects, and
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existing architectural context, including historic and modern designs, through building articulation, scale and proportion, roof forms, detailing, fenestration, and/or the use of complementary materials.

CS3-A-2. Contemporary Design: Explore how contemporary designs can contribute to the development of attractive new forms and architectural styles; as expressed through use of new materials or other means.

CS3-A-3. Established Neighborhoods: In existing neighborhoods with a well-defined architectural character, site and design new structures to complement or be compatible with the architectural style and siting patterns of neighborhood buildings.

CS3-A-4. Evolving Neighborhoods: In neighborhoods where architectural character is evolving or otherwise in transition, explore ways for new development to establish a positive and desirable context for others to build upon in the future.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed the immediate context is ‘established’ with predominantly new and contemporary design, which the new block should continue but not mimic, and exceed in material quality and expression. As a larger, taller contributor to the ‘evolving neighborhood’, the new block should be carefully scaled-down and acknowledge the grain and patterns of each orientation, such as the scale and zone change to the north/John Street. This block and location deserves a strong and clear identity, not overtly contextual or deferential, but certain historical/cultural references (CS3-B) should be woven into the materials, paving, landscape and or storefronts of the public spaces to ground them in this specific Seattle place. Also see DC3-II.

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.

PL1-A-2. Adding to Public Life: Seek opportunities to foster human interaction through an increase in the size and quality of project-related open space available for public life.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed this block is a crucial cross-roads of an open space network, comprised of adjacent parks, plazas and streets. Thus, this location deserves a generous and exceptional ground plane design, yet the ‘preferred’ one shown on page 59 appears little different than a typical SLU infill block with through block connector. The Board found the study diagrams on pages 56/57 as more promising. The site design and pedestrian amenity should better enhance open space and contribute more to the public life of the block, the urban room, the SLU neighborhood, and ultimately the city. For example, is there any place where the general public is invited to raise above the ground plane, to a public

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‘outlook’ (CS2-I-i), to the park, south to downtown views, or north to the lake?

PL1-B Walkways and Connections

PL1-B-1. Pedestrian Infrastructure: Connect on-site pedestrian walkways with existing public and private pedestrian infrastructure, thereby supporting pedestrian connections within and outside the project.

PL1-B-2. Pedestrian Volumes: Provide ample space for pedestrian flow and circulation, particularly in areas where there is already heavy pedestrian traffic or where the project is expected to add or attract pedestrians to the area.

PL1-B-3. Pedestrian Amenities: Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian oriented open spaces to enliven the area and attract interest and interaction with the site and building should be considered.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board acknowledged that an east-west, through-block pedestrian connector is code-required, and agreed it should not be covered by buildings at all (as suggested by massing option #3). Although code may allow some percentage of solid cover, the Board did not agree this particular site should not include overhead coverage. The Board also reiterated the validity of the widened Denny sidewalk shown in the Street Concept Plan, and advised the Westlake frontage also be variegated and wider than typical (see departures). See comments under CS2-II(c) above, for comments about pedestrian needs at the Denny/Westlake corner. The Board agreed the through-block connector shown on 58/59 was too narrow, contorted and cluttered with steps/platforms and other privatizing cues. All mid-block pedestrian paths should be intuitive, visually continuous, relatively step/ramp free, and welcoming to the general public without signage. This is especially true for the first 50-100 ft at the street openings, while any steps or ‘intimacy platforms’ should be fully inboard, near the alley. This guidance also reinforces PL2-D.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed these SLU specific guidelines strongly reinforce the comments under PL1-B above.

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

PL2-A Accessibility

PL2-A-1. Access for All: Provide access for people of all abilities in a manner that is fully integrated into the project design. Design entries and other primary access points such that all visitors can be greeted and welcomed through the front door.

PL2-A-2. Access Challenges: Add features to assist pedestrians in navigating sloped sites, long blocks, or other challenges.

PL2-D Wayfinding

PL2-D-1. Design as Wayfinding: Use design features as a means of wayfinding wherever possible.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the importance that all grade changes on primary mid-block paths be gradual slopes and gracious for all users (crutches, strollers, wheelchairs, etc) and not shift users off desire lines to inconvenient ramps or elevators. Grade transitions from sidewalks to commercial uses should be flat and logically placed entrance doors should dictate floor slab elevations, not the avoidance of stepped floors. The mid block paths should reinforce pedestrian desire lines, be easily legible, and clearly delineate pedestrian safe zones on the alley portion.

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.

PL2-I-ii. Streetscape Amenities: Provide pedestrian-friendly streetscape amenities

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

PL2-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).

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board commended the applicants ground floor schemes for placing continuous commercial uses along the perimeter streets of Westlake and Denny, and turning corners on 9th and John; this is essential for such a strategic location. The Board was less supportive of the high percentage of valuable Westlake frontage devoted to a 'secure' office lobby (see Departures). This risks becoming a dead storefront after-hours and such use/ frontage would be better placed mid block, perhaps sharing a through-block connector frontage. All street front commercial spaces should be true commercial, with doors to the street and serving the general public; tenant cafeterias and similar 'faux commercial' should

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be located in a less prominent location, above grade or possibly along the alley.

PL2-II Personal Safety and Security

PL2-II-i. All-Day Activity: Enhance public safety throughout the neighborhood to foster 18- hour public activity. Methods to consider are:

- a. enhanced pedestrian and street lighting;
- b. well-designed public spaces that are defensively designed with clear sight lines and opportunities for eyes on the street.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board supported the primary residential lobby entrance on 9th Avenue, addressing Denny Park, but was unanimously opposed to the high square footage amount and non-activating street frontage effecting almost 300 lineal feet of the northwest corner. The Board does not agree that tenant lounges, media rooms or training rooms are consistently active enough to provide adequate security, especially across from a park that has no commercial activation. The project should reduce the lounge frontage onto 9th, and include true commercial uses on the 9th/John corner and south facing onto the mid-block connector, accessed from the street and/or plaza.

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-2. Common Entries: Multi-story residential buildings need to provide privacy and security for residents but also be welcoming and identifiable to visitors.

PL3-A-3. Individual Entries: Ground-related housing should be scaled and detailed appropriately to provide for a more intimate type of entry.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board supported the prominent diagonal entrance on axis with Bell street, and the verbal description of this as a transparent 'market hall' pavilion; this location, use and massing appears very promising and specific view corridor simulations are expected at the next meeting. The Board suggested a similar context-based location and hierarchy/ensemble of primary entries: Office and residential lobbies; corner/anchor commercial 'front doors'; secondary commercial doors. The door locations on page 59 appear equal, random and/or purely program-driven, and do not support an activated street presence.

PL3-C Retail Edges

PL3-C-1. Porous Edge: Engage passersby with opportunities to interact visually with the building interior using glazing and transparency. Create multiple entries where possible

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and make a physical and visual connection between people on the sidewalk and retail activities in the building.

PL3-C-2. Visibility: Maximize visibility into the building interior and merchandise displays. Consider fully operational glazed wall-sized doors that can be completely opened to the street, increased height in lobbies, and/or special lighting for displays.

PL3-C-3. Ancillary Activities: Allow space for activities such as sidewalk vending, seating, and restaurant dining to occur. Consider setting structures back from the street or incorporating space in the project design into which retail uses can extend.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board commended the applicants for showing porous, visible commercial frontages along the connector and many alley frontages, which will improve the mid-block pedestrian experience. The challenge is to strike the correct balance of interior and street-facing doors and destinations, with the street activation taking priority. Interior doors and/or cafes should correspond with sunlit spaces, logically adjacent to pedestrian flows.

PL4 Active Transportation: Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.

PL4-A Entry Locations and Relationships

PL4-A-1. Serving all Modes of Travel: Provide safe and convenient access points for all modes of travel.

PL4-A-2. Connections to All Modes: Site the primary entry in a location that logically relates to building uses and clearly connects all major points of access.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board commented that the block is adjacent to streetcar, bus stops, and a bike lane on 9th (and the bike commuter route on Dexter, 2 blocks west); intermodal active transport options abound despite the large parking count proposed. The project should integrate highly visible and accommodating bike lanes to the bike parking, and the site design should graciously integrate any bus stops.

DESIGN CONCEPT

DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the preferred singular parking/loading ramp (shown on page 59) at length, including the size and location. While generally supporting the notion of all parking and all loading below grade (rather than multiple loading docks on the alley), the following DRB concerns must be carefully studied, integrated with any DPD technical evaluations, and brought back to the DRB at the next meeting:

- a) The ramp location east of the alley and the proposed reduction in Green Street plantings for a right-turn lane (pg 72) appear to break the green street continuity too much, and crowd the pedestrian realm at the Westlake intersection; study shifting the ramp west of the alley, into the currently expansive residential ground floor.
- b) The proposed 40 ft curb cut (with or without the city required alley curb cut adjacent) presents pedestrian obstacles and breaks the green street, and the pedestrian experience along the ramp is poor; demonstrate why 3 lanes are needed when similar building densities use 1-2 (alley). Provide additional zoom in plans, sections and eye level perspectives of this open ramp, showing materials and all pedestrian views of it.
- c) Provide plans and perspectives of the singular ramp scheme which uses a standard alley curb cut, then 'goosenecks' into a parallel ramp to below. It is understood that the through-block connector may need to shift and consequently create departures; the DRB wishes to see that trade off.
- d) None of the above is an implied endorsement of only one vehicle access point; the DRB respects the need for DPD analysis of traffic flows and non-compliant curb cut locations, and remains open to the prospect that other street access points may be warranted. These comments also reinforce guideline DC1-C.

DC1-C Parking and Service Uses

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

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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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed how the proposed parking/loading ramp will be highly visible from a Green Street, and the edge immediately adjacent to the alley will also be visible to pedestrians on John Street (compared to typical docks and ramps located inboard from street edges). Any ramp edges should be fully enclosed and have exterior walls with pedestrian interest, and all vehicle portals should be as low and narrow as possible, and visible interior wall returns should have quality materials.

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 Façade Composition

DC2-B-1. Façade Composition: Design all building façades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all façades are attractive and well-proportioned.

DC2-B-2. Blank Walls: Avoid large blank walls along visible façades wherever possible. Where expanses of blank walls, retaining walls, or garage façades are unavoidable, include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed the project will be highly visible from distance, from angled street-axis views, and from the proximate vicinity which was built under ‘shorter’ zoning. Façade composition will be critical, and mid-scale responses to specific conditions in the context should be emphasized. For example, the large, long east façade along Westlake will be seen obliquely from downtown, because of the Westlake ‘kink’; that corner and/or elevation might incorporate an angled divot or gesture acknowledging the street view. Although preliminary, the sketches shown on pages 66/67 show façade plane shifts and reveals that appear arbitrary and skin-deep, with no apparent context based reason. The larger sky-porch indent on the south side of the residential tower is a more substantial gesture.

DC2-D Scale and Texture

DC2-D-1. Human Scale: Incorporate architectural features, elements, and details that are of human scale into the building façades, entries, retaining walls, courtyards, and exterior

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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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board commented that human scale and texture will be critical, especially at the lower levels and throughout the extensive pedestrian public realm. Because of this heart/gateway location and role in defining an urban room, facades and design features should express something more refined and civic than a typical infill or ‘fabric’ block, and architectural character distinct from the assemblage of existing residential and office blocks in SLU. The Board supported this distinctive site deserves deviation from the cubic/rectilinear massing forms, and gray/brown color tones commonly found in recent projects in the vicinity.

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

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed how this site should link existing parks, plazas and streetscapes at the ground plane, plus provide sunny and generous outdoor spaces for tenants and residents. Balancing those private spaces, the Board encouraged

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exploration of several fully public spaces located at upper levels, on podium roofs and other locations, noting that the northeast corner mentioned, is likely in perpetual shade from the preferred massing (see pg 53). Also see comments at CS2-I and PL1-A.

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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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed that more softscape than shown should be provided to balance with hardscape in the mid-block connector, as well as on roof decks and upper levels (also reinforces DC4-D). The Board supported fully integrated and site specific artwork, which reinforces the comments under both guideline DC2-D, and CS3-A. Rather than generic 'plop-art' with a tenuous local link, the artwork could incorporate landscape and/or sustainability features, for example: a digital reader board of energy saved, or how much O2 the sites plants are creating.

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.

DC4-A-2. Climate Appropriateness: Select durable and attractive materials that will age well in Seattle's climate, taking special care to detail corners, edges, and transitions.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that since the buildings will be relatively large, and occupy a site with 4 distinct street context influences (plus others more distant), the materiality of separate structures or facades might be distinctly different, yet harmonious. The block should not be one uniform material palette or architectural language; the early sketches on 66/67 (although monotone) suggest the 2 lower pavilions are distinct, but the two larger towers appear too similar. All materials, detailing and execution should be of superior quality for this pivotal site.

DC4-B Signage

DC4-B-1. Scale and Character: Add interest to the streetscape with exterior signs and attachments that are appropriate in scale and character to the project and its environs.

DC4-B-2. Coordination with Project Design: Develop a signage plan within the context of

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architectural and open space concepts, and coordinate the details with façade design, lighting, and other project features to complement the project as a whole, in addition to the surrounding context.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board strongly discouraged large, over-scaled signage. The site is already prominent and will not need oversized graphics, addressing or identifiers. This gateway site should resist the temptation to maximize signage, and deserves to be identified by a superior fit-to-context, architectural excellence, and a precedent setting public realm.

DC4-D Trees, Landscape, and Hardscape Materials

DC4-D-1. Choice of Plant Materials: Reinforce the overall architectural and open space design concepts through the selection of landscape materials.

DC4-D-2. Hardscape Materials: Use exterior courtyards, plazas, and other hard surfaced areas as an opportunity to add color, texture, and/or pattern and enliven public areas through the use of distinctive and durable paving materials. Use permeable materials wherever possible.

DC4-D-4. Place Making: Create a landscape design that helps define spaces with significant elements such as trees.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed the preliminary ground plan on page 59 indicates many large expanses of unrelieved paving, and encouraged more integration of plantings, soft-scape and possibly water features. These could reinforce historic/cultural themes, similar to the boat forms found in the plaza across Denny way. The Board supported the applicant's verbal notion of the Denny Park green infiltrating this block from the west, but agreed the site plans on pages 58/59 did not express any of that intent. The Board agreed the integration of the diagonal southwest entrance with the landscape design of the adjacent publically owned triangle, will be critical to the success of that commercial pavilion, and the public access to the entire block from the west.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the following departures were requested. The Board determination of all departures is not finalized until the last DRB meeting. NOTE: the diagrams provided did not always include precise graphic or dimensioned indications of the magnitude of the departure, thus they are completely preliminary.

1. **Rooftop Features (SMC 23.48.010.H):** The Code requires all rooftop features to be 10 ft minimum from the roof edge, and to not exceed 65% of the roof plan area. The applicant proposes some features to be integrated into side façade treatments and thus less than 10 ft from the roof edge, and proposes the rooftop uses on the residential tower to exceed 65%.

The Board indicated receptivity to reducing or selectively eliminating the 10 ft requirement, in view of superior overall architectural resolution, but the departed sides should be facing mid-block, and not full-length on all sides. The Board was very hesitant to support more than the already sizable 65% allowance, and certainly not the 80% suggested.

2. **Façade Modulation (SMC 23.48.013):** The Code requires the maximum unmodulated façade length of any structure over 125 ft and within 15 ft of a street property line to be 120 ft, and required modulations must be a minimum of 15 ft deep and 40 ft long. The applicant proposes modulations “other than the prescribed” and a façade about 240 ft long.

The Board indicated high caution to this departure, especially since the alternative design was not specific, and the rationale emphasized irrelevant modulation strategies below 125 ft.

3. **Class 1 Pedestrian Street level Setbacks (SMC 23.48.014):** The Code requires facades at the property line along a minimum of 70% of the Westlake frontage, with some provisions for required open spaces such as the through-block connector. The applicant proposes 5-15 ft setbacks along 100% of the Westlake frontage.

The Board indicated receptivity to setbacks in this approximate range, given the special location and the variegated façade shown, but it also depends on a detailed paving and streetscape design including all storefronts, entries and other details.

4. **Street Level Uses (SMC 23.48.014):** The Code requires certain commercial type uses along a minimum of 75% of the Westlake Avenue frontage. The applicant proposes the non-qualifying office lobby of about 100 ft length, resulting in about 72% of that frontage being compliant.

The Board had no inclination to support this departure, regardless of being only 3% difference, because this vital location deserves richly commercial activation at or larger than the 75% requirement.

5. **Curb Cut Width (SMC 23.54.030):** The Code requires two way traffic curb cuts for combined cars and trucks, to be 30 ft maximum width. The applicant proposes a 40 ft wide curb cut for 3 lanes, with one 3-5 ft wide pedestrian refuge spacer.

The Board indicated no opinion at this time as it needs more information on this sensitive aspect, including the DPD analysis of alternative curb cut locations and traffic flows, plus the eye level perspective studies mentioned under guideline DC1-B.

RECOMMENDATIONS

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended moving **the mixed use option** and the preferred massing option #6 forward to MUP application. The Board recommended any all-commercial use/form concept (options 1-3) to return for another Early Design Guidance meeting.