



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE WEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3017804

Address: 413 Fairview Ave N

Applicant: Jim Westcott

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, December 17, 2014

Board Members Present: Christine Harrington
Katherine Idziorek
Boyd Pickrell (Acting Chair)

Board Members Absent: Mindy Black
Janet Stephenson

DPD Staff Present: Beth Hartwick

SITE & VICINITY

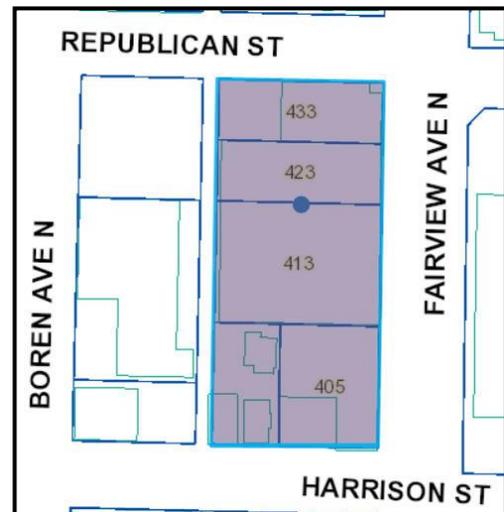
Site Zone: SM (Seattle Mixed) 160/85-240

Nearby Zones: (North) SM160/85-240, SM85/65-160
 (South) SM 160/85-240
 (East) SM 160/85-240, SM/R 55/85
 (West) SM 160/85-240

Lot Area: Approx. 57,225 sq. ft.

Access: The site has access from Fairview Ave N, Harrison St, Republican St. and an improved alley.

Current Development: The site is current developed with four structures; a single-story commercial structure built in 1947, a single-story structure built in 1946 with a warehouse use, a two-story brick office building constructed in 1924 and a single-story office building constructed in 1954.



Environmentally Critical Areas: None

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character: The surrounding sites to the north across Republican St, east across Fairview Ave N, south across Harrison St, and west across the alley are all under development. The site across the alley will be a mixed use structure with residential units over commercial uses. The other projects are mixed use with offices over ground floor commercial. This part of South Lake Union has been in such rapid transition over the last ten years that it is almost unrecognizable from its former low rise, sleepy mix of warehouses, manufacturing and low cost housing.

Fairview Ave N is a fairly busy arterial handling traffic to and from I-5 and Mercer St. and Denny Way. The street has been and still is a demarcation from the more residential neighborhood to the east and commercial and former manufacturing uses to the west.

The site will have access to the South Lake Union Park and waterfront and Cascadia Park for recreational opportunities. Fairview Ave N and Westlake Ave N, 9th Ave N and Denny Way a few blocks away, have bus service. The SLU streetcar is located two blocks away.

The site is located within the South Lake Union Neighborhood Design Guideline area with Harrison St. identified as a “heart location”.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is for development of a half block with a residential and commercial mixed use structure. The podium will include commercial and residential uses. Over the podium will be a 5 to 7 story midrise structure and a tower reaching 24 stories. The building will contain 9,000 to 11,200 sq. ft. of commercial space and 408-432 residential units. Parking for 532-575 vehicles will be provided below grade.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE December 17, 2014
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The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number 3017804 at this website:

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp.

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

Mailing 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 presented three options.

Option 1 showed a development with a 7-story midrise structure, 24-story tower and podium with 408 residential units and approx. 11,295 sq. ft. of retail use. Four levels of below grade parking accessed from the alley would provide 575 parking stalls. The tower was located at the southern portion of the site and the 'C' shaped midrise portion showed a courtyard facing the alley.

Option 2 showed a development with a 7-story midrise structure, 24-story tower and podium with 412 residential units and approx. 9,494 sq. ft. of retail use. Four levels of below grade parking accessed from the alley would provide 532 parking stalls. The tower was located at the northern portion of the site and the 'C' shaped midrise portion showed a courtyard facing Fairview Ave N.

Option 3 was the preferred option and showed a development with a 7-story midrise structure, 24-story tower with 432 residential units and approx. 11,000 sq. ft. of retail use. Four levels of below grade parking accessed from the alley would provide 548 parking stalls. The tower was located at the northern portion of the site and the 'C' shaped midrise portion showed a courtyard facing the alley.

425 Fairview Ave N has been nominated as a potential Landmark structure and will be reviewed by the Landmarks Preservation Board.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Members of the public were present at the meeting and offered the following comments.

- Concerned that the east/west width of the tower is too wide and out of context with the SLU neighborhood. Encouraged a square or round tower.
- Concerned about views as the tower will be 80' higher than the neighboring structures..
- Confused about the proposed open space; is it open to the public? The proposed open space is poorly thought out and has no porosity.
- Concerned about the extra 15' for the penthouse on the roof.
- Did not support departures 1 and 3.
- Preferred option 3 with the tower at the north end of the site.
- Encouraged the proposed retail.
- Encouraged a mid-block connection through the site.
- Encouraged improved wider sidewalks and a mid-block connection to the alley.
- Encouraged activation of the street with retail use, a porous street-face and quality materials.
- Encouraged 'eye pleasing' detailing of the retail space.
- Encouraged flipping the residential courtyards toward Fairview Ave N.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE: January 17, 2014

The Board complimented the applicant on doing a good job analyzing the surrounding blocks, neighborhood character and public spaces.

- 1. Massing: The Board directed the applicant to move forward with preferred massing option 3 and noted that placing the tower at the north end of the site is a good response to context (see below). The Board also supported the location of the residential open spaces facing the alley as they will align with the open space of the development across the alley. (CS1.C, CS2.B.1, CS2.B.3)**
 - a. Continue the evolution of the design highlighting the corners. (CS2.I.iv, CS2.C.1)
 - b. Design a strong podium and street wall with well-designed high quality materials, that provides eddies, and porosity for public spaces. (CS2.B.2, PL2.I, DC2.I.i)
 - c. Align the open space with the open space of the development across the alley. (CS2.B.3, PL1.A.1)
 - d. Use the gap between the tower and the ‘midrise’ portion to provide public space at a human scale and texture. (CS2.B.2, DC2.D.1)
 - e. Consider using the space on the top of the podium as public space. (CS2.I.i, DC2.I.i)
 - f. Supports the bend in the Harrison St. facade. (DC2.B.1, DC2.C.1)
 - g. Retain the step setbacks in the façade along Harrison St. Consider a greater setback at the upper level to meet the intent of the setback requirements.(CS2.II.ii, CS2.C.1)

- 2. Tower Massing: The Board stated that given the development of 300 Boren Ave to the south, that Harrison St. is a SLU heart location, that solar access is important, and the misalignment of Republican St, the best location for the tower is the north end of the site. (CS1.C.3, CS2.B.1, CS2.A.2)**
 - a. Provide additional view analysis of the tower, given the public concern of views of the Lake being blocked. (CS2.A.2, CS2.D.1, DC2.I.ii)
 - b. Consider a greater setback along Fairview Ave N. (CS2.B.2, CS2.II)
 - c. Encourages the design of a thinner tower between Fairview Ave N and the alley. (CS2.II.ii, CS2.I.iii)
 - d. Supports the narrow side of the tower on Fairview, but provide a more elegant massing and design. (CS2.II.iii, DC2.B.1)
 - e. Encourages a slender tower with more open space at the base. (CS2.A.2, CS2.II)
 - f. Consider a bigger setback and varied roof line of the tower and penthouse. (CS2.II.ii, DC2.A.2, DC2.I.i)

- 3. Public Realm and Space: Responding to public comment, the Board questioned how safe and successful a mid-block connection would be given the grade change and that a connection would only lead to the service alley. Instead the public realm space along**

the Fairview Ave N needs to provide a special, rich, civic, experience. The Board noted that recent projects in the area have provided more public space. (CS2.B.2, CS2.I.iv, CS2.II, PL1.B.3, PL2.B.3, PL2.C.3, PL2.I, DC3.B.3)

- a. Provide a generous public realm along the Fairview Ave N street front and corners that is porous, and will promote human activity. (CS2.I.iv, PL1.B.3, PL2.B.3, PL2.I)
- b. Consider using the space on the top of the podium as public space with good access. (CS2.I.i, DC2.I.i)
- c. All commercial space entries should be public and welcoming with weather protection. (PL2.B.3, PL2.C.1, PL2.I)
- d. Provide generous sidewalks. (CS2.II.i, PL1.I.ii)
- e. Landscaping should not impede the porosity of occupiable public space. (DC4.D.1)
- f. The landscaping along the curb edge is an appropriate buffer along the midblock. (DC4.D.1)
- g. Study and relate to the project under development across Fairview Ave N. (PL1.I.ii, PL2.I, DC3.B.3)

4. Relationship to Streets: The Board observed the Fairview Ave N. facade will be the public, civic face of the development, and therefore the street edge should be porous, and that well designed retail space is very important. There was concern about the design of the residential stoops on Harrison St. and Republican St. (CS2.C.3, PL2.B.3, PL2.I, PL3.B.2, DC2.C.1)

- a. The Fairview Ave N street-facing elevation appears flat. Design cutaways that provide eddies, and breaks in the façade. (PL2.I, PL3.C.1)
- b. The design of the retail spaces should not be repetitive. Each space should have its own texture, modulation, and color. (PL2.I.i, DC2.C.1)
- c. All commercial space entries should be public and welcoming. (PL2.B.3, PL2.C.1, PL2.I, PL3.C.1)
- d. Supports the proposed design of the southeast corner and the residential lobby entry at the northeast corner. (CS2.I.iv, CS2.II.i)
- e. Design entries with weather protection, and an ensemble of elements where appropriate. (PL2.C, PL3.A.4)
- f. Design the residential stoops to be effective. (PL3.A.4, PL3.B.2)
- g. Provide enough space to provide security, and a sheltered transition at the residential stoops. (PL3.A.4, PL3.B.2)
- h. Consider providing more open space at the base of the tower. (See departures at the end of the report) (PL2.I, CS2.B.2)
- i. Study and relate to the project under development across Fairview Ave N. (PL1.I.ii, PL2.I, DC3.B.3)

5. Architectural Expression: The Board gave the following guidance for the project as it moves forward.

- a. Study the high quality facades in the South Lake Union neighborhood. (DC4.A.1)
- b. Use the inspiration photos in the EDG packet as a guide. (DC2.B.1, DC4.A.1)
- c. Design a building that speaks a residential language that is different from the surrounding office developments. (DC2.D.1, DC4.A.1)
- d. Consider solar shading on the south elevation of the tower. (CS1.B.3)
- e. Use high quality materials. (DC4.A.1)

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and South Lake Union guidelines identified by the Board as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

CONTEXT & SITE

CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features: Use natural systems/features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.

CS1-B Sunlight and Natural Ventilation

CS1-B-3. Managing Solar Gain: Manage direct sunlight falling on south and west facing facades through shading devices and existing or newly planted trees.

CS1-C Topography

CS1-C-1. Land Form: Use natural topography and desirable landforms to inform project design.

CS1-C-2. Elevation Changes: Use the existing site topography when locating structures and open spaces on the site.

CS2 Urban Pattern and Form: Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.

CS2-A Location in the City and Neighborhood

CS2-A-2. Architectural Presence: Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly.

CS2-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces

CS2-B-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.

CS2-C Relationship to the Block

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

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.

CS2-D Height, Bulk, and Scale

CS2-D-1. Existing Development and Zoning: Review the height, bulk, and scale of neighboring buildings as well as the scale of development anticipated by zoning for the area to determine an appropriate complement and/or transition.

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-ii. Shadows: Minimize shadow impacts to Cascade Park.

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.

CS2-I-iv. Heart Locations: Several areas have been identified as "heart locations." Heart locations serve as the perceived center of commercial and social activity within the neighborhood. These locations provide anchors for the community as they have identity and give form to the neighborhood. Development at heart locations should enhance their central character through appropriate site planning and architecture. These sites have a high priority for improvements to the public realm. A new building's primary entry and facade should respond to the heart location. Special street treatments are likely to occur and buildings will need to respond to these centers of commercial and social activity. Amenities to consider are: pedestrian lighting, public art, special paving, landscaping, additional public open space provided by curb bulbs and entry plazas. See full guidelines for Heart Locations

CS2-II Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility

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

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-B Walkways and Connections

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.

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.

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-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.

PL2-C Weather Protection

PL2-C-1. Locations and Coverage: Overhead weather protection is encouraged and should be located at or near uses that generate pedestrian activity such as entries, retail uses, and transit stops.

PL2-C-2. Design Integration: Integrate weather protection, gutters and downspouts into the design of the structure as a whole, and ensure that it also relates well to neighboring buildings in design, coverage, or other features.

PL2-C-3. People-Friendly Spaces: Create an artful and people-friendly space beneath building.

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).

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-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.

PL3-B Residential Edges

PL3-B-2. Ground-level Residential: Privacy and security issues are particularly important in buildings with ground-level housing, both at entries and where windows are located overlooking the street.

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

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

PL4-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists

PL4-B-1. Early Planning: Consider existing and future bicycle traffic to and through the site early in the process so that access and connections are integrated into the project along with other modes of travel.

PL4-B-2. Bike Facilities: Facilities such as bike racks and storage, bike share stations,

DESIGN CONCEPT

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-2. Reducing Perceived Mass: Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of larger projects.

DC2-B Architectural and Facade Composition

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

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

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.

South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:

DC2-I Architectural Concept and Consistency

DC2-I-i. Roofscape Design: Design the “fifth elevation” — the roofscape — in addition to the streetscape. As this area topographically is a valley, the roofs may be viewed from locations outside the neighborhood such as the freeway and Space Needle. Therefore, views from outside the area as well as from within the neighborhood should be considered, and roof-top elements should be organized to minimize view impacts from the freeway and elevated areas.

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

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-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.

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.

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 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.

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.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based on the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guidelines priorities and achieve a better overall project design than could be achieved without the departure(s). The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

At the time of the Early Design guidance the following departures were requested:

- 1. Height- Rooftop Features (SMC23.48.010.H.7):** The Code states that rooftop features may cover up to 65% of the roof area provided that no rooftop features are located closer than 10' to the roof edge. The applicant proposes roof top features that do not exceed the 65% coverage but are aligned with the north building façade and a portion of the east and west facades. These facades are set back from the property lines.

The Board members indicated they may support this departure if granting it will produce a slender and consistent tower design. The Board noted they would prefer a larger setback and a varied roof line.

- 2. Upper Level Development Standards – Upper-level Setbacks. (SMC23.48.013.C):** The Code requires a 10' set back above 65' along Fairview Ave N for this site. The applicant proposes portions of the residential tower that will protrude into the required setback area by a range of 0 to 6'.

The Board members indicated they may support this departure and directed the applicant to simplify their justifications for the departure using guidelines that support a slender façade and public space at the Fairview Ave N and Republican St. street corner.

- 3. Street-level Development Standards –Façade Requirements. (SMC23.48.014.A.3.b)** The Code states that on streets other than Pedestrian Class I, (Harrison, Fairview Ave and Republican are all Class II streets) the street facing façade may be setback up to 12'. The applicant proposes a greater setback along a portion of Republican St so that the tower can be brought down to the street.

The Board members indicated they may support this departure and directed the applicant to simplify their justifications for the departure using guidelines that support a slender façade and public space at the Fairview Ave N and Republican St. street corner.

- 4. Upper Level Setbacks Requirements (SMC23.48.012.A.):** The code requires for this site any portion of a structure greater than 45' in height along Harrison St provide "A setback of 1 foot for every 2 additional feet of height is required for any portion of a structure exceeding the maximum height permitted without a setback according to subsection 23.48.012.A.1, up to a maximum setback of 15 feet measured from the street lot line". The applicant proposes to step back the façade but as the building is angled a portion of the structure will be in the required setback area.

The Board members indicated they may grant this departure depending on how the proposed setback at this portion of the development will relate to the rest of the building design. They suggested providing a greater setback at the upper levels to meet the intent of this code section.

RECOMMENDATIONS

BOARD DIRECTION

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