



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3018131

Address: 2229 6<sup>th</sup> Av

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

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, October 21, 2014

Board Members Present: Mathew Albores, Chair  
Anjali Grant  
Alan McWain  
Gundula Proksch

Board Members Absent: Murphy McCullough

DPD Staff Present: Michael Dorcy

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: DMC 340/240-400

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

Lot Area: 12,960 sq. ft.



**Current Development:**

Surface parking lot

**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

The area is in transition, a mix of older commercial buildings of limited height and newer high rise construction, both office and residential buildings. The area was up-zoned in 2005 to allow for increased height and density. Bell Street on the north is a designated "Green Street,"

**Access:**

Access from alley to the west

**Environmentally Critical Areas:**

None on site or in immediate area

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

An eleven story, 165,000 sq. ft. data processing facility with approximately 10,000 sq. ft. of retail at grade. Parking for 32 vehicles below grade, accessed from alley.

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The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3018131) at this website:

[http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design\\_Review\\_Program/Project\\_Reviews/Reports/default.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp).

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](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

**DESIGN DEVELOPMENT**

The intention is to construct an 11-story building to house data support systems while creating a neighborhood-compatible architectural expression with proportionately large retail uses at the ground floor level. The data center's cooling system is designed to support the export of heat to

surrounding buildings, potentially fulfilling the majority of their hydroponic heating energy requirements.

Three massing potentials were presented to the Board, with minimal differentiation except for notches, seams and minor articulation differences in the buildings' skins.

In the second option a vertical seam integrates a slightly recessed top and bottom. The third (preferred) option did not offer a planer differentiation of the top of the building, but showed a seam separating the top from the base.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was one member of the public in attendance who complimented the project for its potential contribution to a "District Energy System." No other public comments were received.

## **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.

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#### **1. Themes (as suggested by the Board Chair):**

- a. Massing Options
- b. Ground floor building entry
- c. Facades
- d. Materials

Regarding the *massing options* that had been presented, the Board members noted that the massing of each was more or less the same. It was suggested that Option 2 was perhaps as viable as the design team's Option 3. Further discussion pointed in a direction of an option that combined the features of both options. In pointing out some of the compelling features in Option 2 as shown on p.A-24, namely the linking of the top and base and the strong vertical seam, it was also noted that the base really needed a single expression and articulation, a seam was needed separating the tower and the base along 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and in no instance should the vertical seam terminate at the *ground floor building entry* which was otherwise to be de-emphasized. The Board also discussed and responded favorably to features of Option 3: the clear, singular expression of the base and the strong impression of the layering of the facades. Again, it was pointed out that the enlarged canopy above the secure *ground floor building entry* did not seem to make much sense. The seam between tower and base along 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, as seen in the rendering of Option 3 on p.A-24, needed to be more pronounced, incised along that façade above the base, "without appearing to be a belt." The articulation of a band or ribbon, as shown in the sketches on p.A-30, would be the better direction to go.

Regarding the *facades* it was generally agreed upon that the double-height space of the base retail should receive a single expression (although the Board remained anxious to see how that space could be appointed in such a way as to truly enliven the pedestrian experience along Bell Street and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and would expect to see convincing renderings at the next go-round). The base was referred to as a “jewel Box,” which communicated some of the kind of expectations they would harbor for the continued design development of the ground floor space. It was also agreed by the Board members that the designers should not be tempted to make the structure look like an office building, whether day or night. It needed to be treated as a sculptural piece.

The Board remarked that the palette of *materials* shown on pp. A-31 and 32 in the packet, as well as the sketches on A-30, indicated that the design team was thinking in the right direction. It would be equally important to pursue more concretely some of the lighting schemes only hinted at this stage of plan development.

The Board also noted that the sketches indicated a bit more playfulness and latitude allowed for the code-compliant notch at the structure’s top. The Board indicated a willingness to entertain a departure request for adjustments to the notch that might require such, and suggested that the design team should continue to explore the variety of design moves shown in the sketches, even should they require departures to achieve a better design.

## DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood 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](#).

### SITE PLANNING AND MASSING

**A2 Enhance the Skyline: Design the upper portion of the building to promote visual interest and variety in the downtown skyline. Respect existing landmarks while responding to the skyline’s present and planned profile.**

**A2.1. Desired Architectural Treatments:** Use one or more of the following architectural treatments to accomplish this goal:

- a. sculpt or profile the facades;
- b. specify and compose a palette of materials with distinctive texture, pattern, or color;
- c. provide or enhance a specific architectural rooftop element.

**A2.2. Rooftop Mechanical Equipment:** In doing so, enclose and integrate any rooftop mechanical equipment into the design of the building as a whole.

### ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION

- l. increasing building setbacks from the zone edge at ground level;
- m. reducing the bulk of the building’s upper floors; and

n. limiting the length of, or otherwise modifying, facades.

**B3 Reinforce the Positive Urban Form & Architectural Attributes of the Immediate Area.: Consider the predominant attributes of the immediate neighborhood and reinforce desirable siting patterns, massing arrangements, and streetscape characteristics of nearby development.**

**B3.1. Building Orientation:** In general, orient the building entries and open space toward street intersections and toward street fronts with the highest pedestrian activity. Locate parking and vehicle access away from entries, open space, and street intersections considerations.

**B3.2. Features to Complement:** Reinforce the desirable patterns of massing and facade composition found in the surrounding area. Pay particular attention to designated landmarks and other noteworthy buildings. Consider complementing the existing: green street features.

**B3.3. Pedestrian Amenities at the Ground Level:** Consider setting the building back slightly to create space adjacent to the sidewalk conducive to pedestrian-oriented activities such as vending, sitting, or dining. Reinforce the desirable streetscape elements found on adjacent blocks. Consider complementing existing: lighting and landscaping, and overhead weather protection.

**B4 Design a Well-Proportioned & Unified Building: Compose the massing and organize the interior and exterior spaces to create a well-proportioned building that exhibits a coherent architectural concept. Design the architectural elements and finish details to create a unified building, so that all components appear integral to the whole.**

**B4.1. Massing:** When composing the massing, consider how the following can contribute to create a building that exhibits a coherent architectural concept: setbacks, projections.

**B4.2. Coherent Interior/Exterior Design:** When organizing the interior and exterior spaces and developing the architectural elements, consider how the following can contribute to create a building that exhibits a coherent architectural concept: facade modulation and articulation.

**B4.3. Architectural Details:** When designing the architectural details, consider how the following can contribute to create a building that exhibits a coherent architectural concept: exterior finish materials; architectural lighting.

## THE STREETScape

**C1 Promote Pedestrian Interaction: Spaces for street level uses should be designed to engage pedestrians with the activities occurring within them. Sidewalk-related spaces should appear safe, welcoming, and open to the general public.**

**C1.1. Street Level Uses:** Provide spaces for street level uses that:

- a. reinforce existing retail concentrations;
- b. vary in size, width, and depth;
- c. enhance main pedestrian links between areas; and

d. establish new pedestrian activity where appropriate to meet area objectives. Design for uses that are accessible to the general public, open during established shopping hours, generate walk-in pedestrian clientele, and contribute to a high level of pedestrian activity.

**C1.2. Retail Orientation:** Where appropriate, consider configuring retail space to attract tenants with products or services that will “spill-out” onto the sidewalk (up to six feet where sidewalk is sufficiently wide).

**C1.3. Street-Level Articulation for Pedestrian Activity:** Consider setting portions of the building back slightly to create spaces conducive to pedestrian-oriented activities such as vending, resting, sitting, or dining. Further articulate the street level facade to provide an engaging pedestrian experience.

**C2 Design Facades of Many Scales: Design architectural features, fenestration patterns, and material compositions that refer to the scale of human activities contained within. Building facades should be composed of elements scaled to promote pedestrian comfort, safety, and orientation.**

**C2.1. Modulation of Facades:** Consider modulating the building facades and reinforcing this modulation with the composition of: exterior finish materials; lighting.

**C3 Provide Active — Not Blank — Facades: Buildings should not have large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks.**

**C3.1. Desirable Facade Elements:** Facades which for unavoidable programmatic reasons may have few entries or windows should receive special design treatment to increase pedestrian safety, comfort, and interest. Enliven these facades by providing: different textures, colors, or materials that break up the facade’s surface.

**C5 Encourage Overhead Weather Protection: Project applicants are encouraged to provide continuous, well-lit, overhead weather protection to improve pedestrian comfort and safety along major pedestrian routes.**

**C5.1. Overhead Weather Protection Design Elements:** Overhead weather protection should be designed with consideration given to: the overall architectural concept of the building; uses occurring within the building.

**C6 Develop the Alley Façade: To increase pedestrian safety, comfort, and interest, develop portions of the alley facade in response to the unique conditions of the site or project.**

## PUBLIC AMENITIES

**D2 Enhance the Building with Landscaping: Enhance the building and site with generous landscaping— which includes special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, and site furniture, as well as living plant material.**

**D2.1. Landscape Enhancements:** Landscape enhancement of the site should include on a Green Street, coordination of improvements with the local Green Street plan.

**D2.2. Consider Nearby Landscaping:** Reinforce the desirable pattern of landscaping found on adjacent block faces: plant street trees that match the existing planting pattern or species; use similar landscape materials; and

**D3 Provide Elements That Define the Place: Provide special elements on the facades, within public open spaces, or on the sidewalk to create a distinct, attractive, and memorable “sense of place” associated with the building.**

**D3.2. Intersection Focus:** Enliven intersections by treating the corner of the building or sidewalk with public art and other elements that promote interaction (entry, tree, seating, etc.) and reinforce the distinctive character of the surrounding area.

**D5 Provide Adequate Lighting: To promote a sense of security for people downtown during nighttime hours, provide appropriate levels of lighting on the building facade, on the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, in landscaped areas, and on signage.**

**D5.1. Lighting Strategies:** Consider employing the following lighting strategy as appropriate: Illuminate distinctive features of the building, including entries, signage, canopies, and areas of architectural detail and interest.

## **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting the applicants did not request any departures from development standards.

## **BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application.