



## FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE NORTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3018670

Address: 1701 NW 56<sup>th</sup> Street

Applicant: Brenda Barnes, Clark Design Group, PLLC

Date of Meeting: Monday, June 15, 2015

Board Members Present: Ellen Cecil, Chair  
Marc Angelillo  
Dale Kutzera  
Chris Bell  
Keith Walzak

Board Members Absent: None

DPD Staff Present: Katy Haima (for Michael Dorcy)

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: NC3-85 (Neighborhood Commercial)

Nearby Zones: (North) NC3-65  
(South) NC3-85  
(East) NC3--85  
(West) NC3-85

Lot Area: 28,500 sf



**Current Development:**

The site consists of six parcels, five of which are occupied by smaller residential buildings, facing onto NW 56<sup>th</sup> Street, just west of 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW. The site is located a half block north of NW Market Street and Swedish Medical Center-Ballard.

**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

The site is located within the Ballard Urban Center Village. It is located on a long single block face that extends from 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW on the east to 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW on the west. The north side of NW 56<sup>th</sup> Street is occupied by a mixture of single-family and multifamily residences. Some multi-family structures of more recent vintage are intermingled with older single family houses throughout the immediate area. A mix of institutional and commercial buildings are located along NW Market Street and the blocks to the south of the site.

**Access:**

Access to the site is available from an alley that runs east and west south of the development site.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:**

There are no ECA’s on the site.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicant proposes a mixed-use structure with some 4,400 sq. ft. of retail space and 10 live/work units at grade, and six floors containing 177 residential apartments in a seven -story building. Parking for 114 vehicles will be provided below and at grade.

**Early Design Guidance: November 24, 2014**

**DESIGN DEVELOPMENT**

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3018670) 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)

The preferred option, Option C, would be a seven-story structure with a ground floor containing two residential lobbies, a retail space (3,917 Sq. ft.) at the corner of 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW and NW 56<sup>th</sup> Street, 11 live/work units along the street front, and parking for 117 vehicles underlying 6 stories of residential units, containing a total of 163 residential units. Amenity areas would be provided on the second and third levels as well on the rooftop. There would be additional live/work units as well as some of the residential units oriented to the south, activating the alley façade. The middle portion of the NW 56<sup>th</sup> Street façade would be recessed between “bookends” which would be pushed forward to the street front. The rear of the structure would be pushed to the alley. Option B, would be pushed to the street front and generally unmodulated, with top five floors recessed from the alley. Option A would likewise be pushed to the street above the live/work units and otherwise be generally unmodulated along this face.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Sixteen members of the public attending the meeting signed in to become parties of record and several expressed concerns regarding a number of issues, including: the undesirability of big building-small apartments characterizing recent development in Ballard; the disappearance of green space for the neighborhood; disappearance of the historic and established “feel” of Ballard; the proliferation of large apartment buildings in general; impacts on the availability of parking; infrastructure stretched to the breaking point; the disappearance of small retail spaces that actually serve the neighborhood.

## **PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

### **FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE November 24, 2014**

The Board voiced the following concerns:

- It was noted that this was a big (long at 300 feet) building that needed to be broken up along a finer scale. Although the preferred option divided the massing along NW 56<sup>th</sup> Street into three parts, the Board noted that there was no compelling reason for the symmetry of the north façade of the structure—the book ends or towers need not be equal in breadth and bulk; the west end, for example might better transition to the building to its side by losing some height. The Board requested further exploration of the massing that would diminish the perception of height, bulk and scale.
- The proposed north-facing facades did not clearly address the zone change at NW 56<sup>th</sup> Street and the smaller residential structures currently across the street.

- The Board asked the design team to consider the impact on existing smaller structures, in particular the smaller structure to the west of the development site. This consideration would examine blank walls, window adjacencies, the effectiveness of voluntary setbacks, etc.
- It was unclear how the so-called amenity areas proposed would actually function as “amenities.”
- It was not clear how the live/work spaces were intended to work and function as live/work spaces: would they provide a porous edge, with transparency, along the sidewalk? How could they effectively engage the sidewalk and enhance the pedestrian experience on NW 56<sup>th</sup> Street while still maintaining an element of privacy?.
- NW 56<sup>th</sup> is a commercial street, even if it doesn’t feel as such at the moment; the design should be such as to make it readily convertible to commercial at some point in the future.
- Think glass for overhead weather protection to allow ample lighting for safety, vitality of plantings, etc.
- For the landscaping, play with an integrated water element tying the building and ground plane together.
- The Board supported the desire to create a contemporary look, utilizing quality materials and careful detailing. Reference was made during the presentation to the Scandinavian heritage of the locale, and some subtle reference was evident in the materials presented—if the reference is appropriate, it should be exploited and made more prominent and not totally subtle.
- The entries should be clearly readable and the primary residential entry should receive treatment as “primary.”

**FINAL RECOMMENDATION: June 15, 2015**

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The applicant described the design concept of the proposed development, which included a massing divided into four parts. Since the EDG Meeting, the proposed design has been further

developed to incorporate refined design expressions for each portion of the massing. The east corner features overlapping horizontal bands of flat metal panel and vertical bands of metal panel with profile and synthetic wood siding over a background of glazing to emphasize the prominence of the corner. The middle portion of the massing is pulled back from the street and punctuated with vertical bays. The corner and middle portion rest on a highly transparent “stilted” base. The west portion of the massing is pushed to the street, and is intended to visually anchor the building. This portion is narrower than the corner mass, and features a vertical expression through the use of thick vertical bands of dark cement fiber and heavier concrete framing at the base.

In response to Early Design Guidance and DPD direction, the applicant presented a modified design at the Recommendation meeting, including a continuation of the design language to each portion of the massing along the alley elevation, and refined the entries, overhead weather protection, and relation of ground-level units to the sidewalk to create a legible and varied pedestrian experience. The main retail entry is inset from the main corner of the building; a large canopy wraps the corner to provide weather protection and demarcate the entry. The residential lobby is located just to the west of the retail entry, also set back from the property line. This entry is sheltered by a canopy, similar to the retail entry. A two-story vertical architectural concrete pillar with signage is located adjacent to the residential entry. The mid-block ground floor units are set back from the pedestrian street with private stoops raised above street level, and separated with screens and planters. Above the live-work units, the building steps back to create a private terrace space.

To address privacy concerns for the residential building to the west, the proposed development locates blank facades facing the decks of the adjacent structure.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following comments, issues, and concerns were raised during the public comment portion of the Recommendation Meeting:

- Appreciated the changes made to the design since the EDG Meeting, and felt that the design is overall greatly improved.
- Supported the materials and color palette as presented by the applicant.
- Felt the massing appears less garish, and more subtle than presented at EDG.
- Appreciated the rooftop amenity space and landscaping.

#### **PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### **FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS: JUNE 15, 2015**

The Board was very pleased with the thorough presentation from the applicant in response to the previously provided guidance.

1. **Massing and Design Concept.** The packet was clear and informative in demonstrating the design concepts used to break up the long façade and reduce the perceived mass. (CS2-D, DC2-A)
  - a. The Board appreciated the clear demonstration of each side of the building and overall massing concept and architectural composition of four distinct portions.(DC2-A, DC2-B)
  - b. The refinements to the massing scheme, especially in regards to the west end, provide a more sensitive transition to adjacencies. (CS2-B, CS2-D, DC2-A)
  - c. The Board felt that the applicant was successful in distinguishing the design language of the two “ends” of the building as to not appear symmetrical. (CS2-C, CS3-A, DC2-A, DC2-B)
  
2. **Materials & Façade Composition.** The Board appreciated the composition of materials, attention to detailing, and high quality finishes on all facades. (DC2-A, DC2-B, DC4-A)
  - a. The Board supported the vertical bands of finely textured horizontal paneling. (CS3-A, DC2-B, DC4-A)
  - b. The Board appreciated the treatment of the alley with the same high-quality finishes and materials as the rest of the building facades. (DC2-B, DC4-A)
  - c. The selection and composition of materials, especially the warm wood toned color, create an articulated design language. (CS3-A, DC2-B)
  - d. The Board had some concern over the dark shade of grey panels facing the balconies of the adjacent building to the west, and the potential impact on light quality. The Board requested that the applicant consider a lighter shade, but not at the expense of compromising the overall design composition and color palette. (CS2-D, DC2-B)
  
3. **Amenity Space.** The Board was pleased with the large amenity space and lush planting on the rooftop. (DC3-B)
  
4. **Streetscape & Entries.** The Board endorsed the progression of streetscape expressions along NW 56<sup>th</sup> Street, and felt it created variety in the pedestrian experience. (PL3-A, PL2-B, CS2-C)
  - a. The Board supported the lush landscaping along NW 56<sup>th</sup> Street. (CS2-A, CS2-B, CS3-A)
  - b. The Board felt the rhythm and scale of the live-work unit entries had a residential expression was an appropriate response for this streetscape; however, the units should retain their transparency and remain flexible to accommodate commercial uses. (CS3-A, PL2-B, PL3-A, PL3-B, DC1-A)

## DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines identified by the Board as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, with the note that a second Early Design Guidance meeting could well give further priority and focus to the guidelines particularly important to the success of the project. 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-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-E Water**

**CS1-E-1. Natural Water Features:** If the site includes any natural water features, consider ways to incorporate them into project design, where feasible

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

**CS2-A Location in the City and Neighborhood**

**CS2-A-1. Sense of Place:** Emphasize attributes that give a distinctive sense of place. Design the building and open spaces to enhance areas where a strong identity already exists, and create a sense of place where the physical context is less established.

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

**CS2-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces**

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

**CS2-C Relationship to the Block**

**CS2-C-3. Full Block Sites:** Break up long facades of full-block buildings to avoid a monolithic presence. Provide detail and human scale at street-level, and include repeating elements to add variety and rhythm to the façade and overall building design.

**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.

**CS2-D-5. Respect for Adjacent Sites:** Respect adjacent properties with design and site planning to minimize disrupting the privacy of residents in adjacent buildings.

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

**CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes**

**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-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.

## PUBLIC LIFE

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

### **PL2-B Safety and Security**

**PL2-B-1. Eyes on the Street:** Create a safe environment by providing lines of sight and encouraging natural surveillance.

**PL2-B-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.

**PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.**

### **PL3-A Entries**

**PL3-A-1. Design Objectives:** Design primary entries to be obvious, identifiable, and distinctive with clear lines of sight and lobbies visually connected to the street.

**PL3-A-4. Ensemble of Elements:** Design the entry as a collection of coordinated elements including the door(s), overhead features, ground surface, landscaping, lighting, and other features.

### **PL3-B Residential Edges**

**PL3-B-3. Buildings with Live/Work Uses:** Maintain active and transparent facades in the design of live/work residences. Design the first floor so it can be adapted to other commercial use as needed in the future.

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

### **PL4-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists**

**PL4-B-2. Bike Facilities:** Facilities such as bike racks and storage, bike share stations, shower facilities and lockers for bicyclists should be located to maximize convenience, security, and safety.

## DESIGN CONCEPT

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

### **DC1-A Arrangement of Interior Uses**

**DC1-A-3. Flexibility:** Build in flexibility so the building can adapt over time to evolving needs, such as the ability to change residential space to commercial space as needed.

**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 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.

**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-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.

**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.

**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)

At the time of the FINAL Recommendation meeting the following departures were requested:

1. **SMC 23.47A.008.B.3. Street-level Development Standards:** The Code requires a floor-to-floor height of at least 13 feet for non-residential street-level uses. The applicant is

proposing a floor-to-floor height under a mezzanine of 9'-9" at the retail space on the corner, 10'-4" at the live-work spaces between lobbies, and 12'-4" at the 3 live-work spaces at the west end.

The Board unanimously supported the departure, noting that raising ceiling height would result in a taller base which would be out of proportion with the residential scale and expression that the Board approved. In addition, the Board felt that the departure allows for an arrangement of interior uses that is flexible for residential or commercial uses. Providing ample living space on the mezzanine allows the first floor to adequately accommodate retail/commercial uses. (PL3-B, DC1-A, DC2-B)

2. **SMC 23.47A.008.B.3. Street-level Development Standards:** The Code requires and an average depth of 30 feet and a minimum depth of 15 feet for non-residential street-level uses. The applicant proposes a reduction in minimum and average depths.

The Board unanimously supported the departure, which is directly related to the floor-to-floor height departure. The Board felt that the depth of the mezzanine provides ample living space, creating the flexibility to accommodate both residential and commercial activities on the ground floor as needed in the future. (PL3-B, DC1-A)

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**The recommendation summarized above was based on the design review packet dated June 15, 2015, and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the June 15, 2015 Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, the five Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the project design with no conditions.**