



City of Seattle

Department of Construction & Inspections
Nathan Torgelson, Director



FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3018686

Address: 2031 3rd Avenue

Applicant: Brad Hinthorne, Perkins+Will, for Martin Selig Real Estate

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, January 17, 2017

Board Members Present: Murphy McCullough, Chair
Bradley Calvert
J P Emery
Anjali Grant
Grace Leong

SDCI Staff Present: Michael Dorcy

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: DMC 240/290-400

Nearby Zones: (North) DMR/R 125/65
(East) DMC 240/290-400
(West) DMC 240/290-400
(South) DMC 240/290-400

Lot Area: 19,440 sq. ft.



Current Development:

The project site is currently developed with three two-story commercial buildings, with the Jewish Federation Building occupying the northern half of the site. Currently under construction immediately to the south of the development site is a mixed-use building, with ground floor retail/ commercial and 6 stories of residential apartments above.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

This area of Belltown has been a mixture of low-rise and medium-rise structures, many constructed during the first half of the 20th century. Twelve of the buildings have been designated as historic landmarks. The majority of the historic and iconic buildings are of masonry construction, many composed of red brick. In recent years the historic fabric of Belltown has been transformed by the inclusion of towers of significant heights gathered about two nodes. The proposed new tower is part of the southeastern gathering of towers. Nine towers, ranging in height from 240 feet to 449 feet, are situated within a two-block radius of the proposal site.

Access:

Vehicular access to the site is planned to be from the alley west of the site.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

There are no critical areas on the site.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a 36-story high-rise building to be built to a height of 440 feet and which would accommodate 187,000 square feet of office space, 330 residential units and 7,000 square feet of ground floor retail. Parking for 250 vehicles would be provided below grade.

At the first EDG meeting, held on Tuesday, January 6, 2015, three massing concepts were presented to the Board by the applicants. The third, the preferred concept, was the “Z scheme.” This concept maintained a separate ground-floor division of lobbies in a rectangular base, topped by 15 floors of office space in a four-sided essentially plain, rectangular form. Out of the base there would arise 13 stories of residences, situated in a 10-sided rectilinear tower which suggested an abstracted “Z”-form.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Although the Board had recommended at the January 6, 2015 EDG meeting that the applicants proceed to MUP application, significant changes in the proposed program prompted the applicants to request a second EDG meeting. At the 2nd EDG meeting, held on July 28, 2015, the design team explained to the Board that the massing of the proposal had been altered to reflect changes in the amount of allowable office area available, subject to the amount of FAR that

would be available for transfer from one-fewer adjacent parcels. The applicants had voluntarily returned to the Downtown Design Review Board in order to clarify and illustrate the massing changes and receive further guidance from the Board.

The massing changes, as explained by the design team, resulted in a simplification of the overall form of the building, notably in omitting the notch that had separated the lower office floors from the upper residential floors. It was believed that the unique shape of the residential portion of the tower was sufficiently interesting without the notch. Additionally, the outdoor open areas on the 12th floor and on the rooftop had been given further development. In particular the “top” floor—in reality a three-story space-- “Conservatory” space was designed to contain a fitness center and other gathering spaces, heavily glazed and filled with ample vegetation. (See page 11 of the July 28th packet.) The “Conservatory” rooftop feature would require a departure from SMC 23.49.008.B. (See the listing of proposed departures on page 20 of the July 28th packet, and on pages 4 and 5 of this report.)

The four Board members present at the July 28th meeting reaffirmed their approval that the project should proceed to design development and MUP intake. Also, after considering the analysis of the site and context, the changes in the program provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, they reaffirmed the applicability of the guidelines earlier identified for the project and the guidance given at the January 6, 2015 EDG meeting.

Packets for each of the Design Review meetings as presented at the meetings, are available online by entering the project number (3018686) at this website:
http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp.

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

**Public Resource
Center**
700 Fifth Ave.,
Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA
98124-4019

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The proposed structure would be 440 feet tall, a 36-story mixed-use high rise of approximately 187,000 square feet of office space and 330 apartments. 75 percent of its ground floor street

frontage, a total of 7,000 square feet, would be in retail use, enhanced by thirty-foot ceiling heights. Separate entries for residential and office uses were located on two separate streets, Lenora and 3rd Avenue. There would be 10 floors of office space, in the lower portion of the tower. A shared amenity floor, outdoor terrace space, would separate the office space from the 22 residential floors, those topped by a tall, multi-story conservatory space. Additionally, a series of 3-story social spaces would be distributed throughout the residential portion of the tower. There would be 5 floors of below-grade parking providing for 250 cars.

PUBLIC COMMENT

At the second EDG meeting, nearby residents had expressed concerns regarding: security of the block and the need for security lighting; the activation of the street which worked better in conjunction with more and smaller retail spaces; the need for activation moving around the corner, along Lenora Street as well as along 3rd Avenue; glare from materials used in the building—glass and metal; removal of some of the stern rectangularity of the proposed structure; consideration of views of the building from the waterfront—profile, top, place in skyline. It was noted that the alley and the alley façade needed careful and not just “backside” and “back-of-house” treatment. One observer wanted no “iconic” lights. Another “loved the midline cantilever” and its effect as shown in the cover rendering, and warned against engineering the dramatic effect out of the profile. Representatives of the properties directly south of the proposed site expressed concerns regarding the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) calculations upon which massing calculations were based. Other concerns regarded tower spacing on the block.

There were no public comments offered at the recommendation meeting held on March 29, 2016.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

At the time of the second Early Design Guidance meeting, five departures from development standards had been mentioned. At the recommendation meeting the requested departures had been narrowed to three:

SMC 23.54.030.B.2.c

For non-residential uses with 20 or more parking spaces, a minimum of 35% and a maximum of 65% are to be striped for small vehicles. A minimum of 35% are to be large stalls. The applicants’ request was to allow 16% for large and 84% for small and medium stalls. As explained by the design team, the departure would allow for optimizing the location of the building’s central cores within the challenging shape as well as modifying stall configurations, thus contributing to a better proportioned and more unified building (Guidelines B-2 and E-2).

SMC 23.49.008.B A 10 % height bonus with facades enclosing an area of less than 9,000 sf. The applicants' request was to allow a total of 14,590 sf of enclosed area. As explained by the design team, the tower-top conservatory would strikingly enhance the skyline (A-2) and reinforce the building's sculptural form (Guidelines B-3, B-4).

SMC 23.49.058.E

Per Code, the maximum façade width for residential portions of the building above 85 feet parallel to the Avenues would need to be 80 percent of the lot width or a maximum of 120 feet, whichever is less. The proposed façade width is 178 feet, which would exceed the maximum allowable width and require a departure. The Board confirmed that the residential upper tower "Z plan" provides for an upper building mass of multiple facades unique in the downtown area and one that creates outstanding visual interest. The structure is a well-proportioned and unified building (B-4); it enhances the skyline (A-2), and provides façades that read at many scales (C-2).

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the recommendation meeting held on March 29, 2016, the Board members unanimously recommended approval of the presented design and of the three requested departures, without any recommended conditions of their approval, by a vote of 4-0.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Unfortunately, the applicants failed to identify and include in their presentation another departure needed for the design the Board had approved at the March 29, 2016 meeting. There were no changes in the design presented on January 17, 2017. The project was therefore scheduled for a supplemental meeting for which public notice was given.

PUBLIC COMMENT

SDCI received four written or other comments following notice of the supplemental meeting and two comments following the January 17, 2017 meeting. Each of the comments objected to the granting by the Board of a departure for the width of tower portion of the building. One public comment was elicited at the scheduled meeting which questioned whether the third departure had been granted as the third departure at the recommendation meeting held earlier, on March 29, 2016.

RECOMMENDATION MEETING OF JANUARY 17, 2017

The proposal was returned to the Board at a meeting held on January 17, 2017, at which time the following departure was explained and requested of the Board:

SMC 23.49056.B.2.iii

At a facade height between 15 and 35 feet above sidewalk grade any setback deeper than two feet shall not be wider than 20 feet as measured parallel to the street lot line. The departure would allow 28 feet of width between concrete support columns for a setback deeper than 2 feet. This would allow for the design of the tall two-story loggia as previously shown and recommended for approval by the Board on March 29, 2016.

This design would allow for the proposed widening of the sidewalk to allow for additional usable open space next to retail space (D-1), and the loggia would clearly relate to the horizontal datum of the adjacent context building (B-3). Additionally, the departure would maximize visual interest while providing an “honest” expression of the building’s underlying construction (C-1, C-3).

The setback would help to define the public uses within the building’s ground and second floor and differentiate them from the office uses above. Further, it would provide enhanced pedestrian visual access to activities and, conversely, enhance “eyes on the street” (D-6).

See the fuller narrative of the departure and the explanatory diagrams contained in the packet prepared for the meeting, pages 18 and 19.

The packet for the supplemental January 17, 2017 Design Review Recommendation meeting is available online by entering the project number (3018686) at this website:

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

BOARD DIRECTION

At the January 17, 2017 meeting, the Downtown Design Review Board approved the added departure and reaffirmed their approval of the earlier requested three departures and of the overall design, without any conditions, by a vote of 5-0.